The Seven Golden Candlesticks

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THE

SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.

BY THE

REV. H. B. TRISTRAM, LL.D., F.R.S.

"The seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."—REVELATION i. 20.

Ruins of Christian Church, Ephesus.

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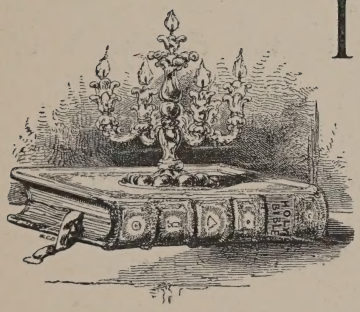
PREFACE.



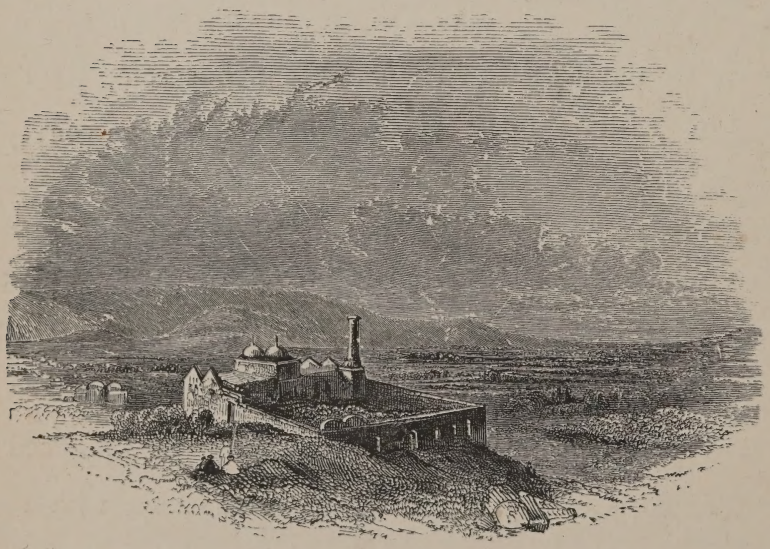
IN the hope that an attempt to illustrate one of the most deeply interesting portions of the Apocalyptic Epistle of St. John, by references to the present state and past history of the Seven Churches, might be profitable to the Christian student, the writer some time ago inserted in *The Sunday at Home* a series of papers conveying the recollections of a visit to those sacred sites.

These papers have since been carefully revised and expanded, with the addition of much new matter and of an introductory chapter. Especial care has been taken to point out the appropriateness of the rewards promised to the faithful in each Church, and their connection with some special local circumstances of each city,—a point which

seems scarcely to have been touched upon in the commentaries on the Epistles. The principal engravings are from the photographs taken by Signor Svoboda; the small illustrations and vignettes are for the most part from rough sketches made by the Author on the spot.

With the earnest prayer that these pages may, in however humble a degree, subserve to the elucidation of God's Holy Word, they are now sent forth.

H. B. TRISTRAM.



MODERN EPHESUS.

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THE TEMPLE SPOILS, SHOWING THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

From the Arch of Titus.

THE

SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.

INTRODUCTION.

TOMB OF ST. LUKE AT EPHESUS.

NEXT to the land consecrated by the footsteps of our blessed Lord himself, there is no country in the world so full of associations precious to every Christian as Asia Minor. Those rugged and indented shores are studded with bays and harbours, with a long bold range of irregular peaks behind them, through the passes of which many a little stream famed in story and in poesy meanders to the sea. There is not a harbour, not a valley, not a plain or mountain, not a brook or dell of that classic soil but is associated with memorable names

or exploits. The native land of Homer—the oldest of poets, of Herodotus—the father of history, Ionia has afforded many a scene for both. In fact, in its mythology and its history it is even more characteristically Greek than was Greece itself. Not only were much of the Hellenic mythology and traditions connected with its romantic glens, it was the field of many of the noblest struggles and the most brilliant victories of Greece. The first resistance to the power of the Persian empire was made by its people; the doom of that empire, when it crumbled before Alexander, was sealed on its soil. We need not recapitulate the many bloody fields of Asia Minor, in which is traced the final establishment of the dominion of Rome over the East, and the internecine struggles which were the prelude of Rome's decay.

"In this, now almost unknown part of Ancient Greece, three of the seven wise men, in the early history of the world, had their birth. Poetry, history, fable, and philosophy had each their fathers in this country. Among the wonders of the world, it boasted its Temple at Ephesus, its Mausoleum in Caria, and its Colossus at Rhodes. The finest work of art, the celebrated Venus, is attributed to this people. The most wealthy of kings and the greatest of heroes rose in this region, and their tumuli remain still undisturbed. The sites of its cities are unknown to us; and even the language of a considerable portion, abounding in inscriptions, has hitherto escaped the observation of the philologists of Europe."[1]

The connection of Asia Minor with Greece was as ancient as it was close. From the earliest to the latest period of the

[1] Fellowes' "Lycia."

national history of these lands it is impossible to separate their annals. The earliest epic in the world, the "Iliad" of Homer, has its scene laid on the shores of Asia Minor. The first struggles of Greece to light and to fame, whether in civilisation, war, or commerce, were here. The great contest with the despotism of Persia, which arrested her march to universal empire, began in cities of Ionia; and the student of history finds Greece and Asia continually interwoven in the annals of Herodotus, himself an Asiatic Greek.

And when the Persian had been expelled,—when for the rigidity of Oriental despotism had been substituted the capricious rule, more cruel and more reckless, of a fickle democracy, imposed on the cities and islands by their Athenian champions—Thucydides tells us how the internecine struggles between Athens and Sparta for supremacy, and their contests for the balance of power, were continually on Asiatic ground. In the pages of that master of philosophic history we can incidentally trace the political career of Miletus and Ephesus, of Sardis and Lesbos, as the galleys of Athens and Sparta disputed for supremacy on their coasts, or landed expeditions in their rivers. The interest of the latter years of the great Peloponnesian war, as told by Xenophon in his "Hellenics," centres in the campaigns on the shores of Asia Minor. Its cities were the hapless prize tossed by the chequered fortune of war from one master to another, when the decaying Persian empire,—taking advantage of the exhaustion under which, after years of civil strife, the republics of Greece succumbed, until the genius of Philip of Macedon welded them again into one nation,—pushed forward its conquests, and regained much of its foothold in Asia Minor.

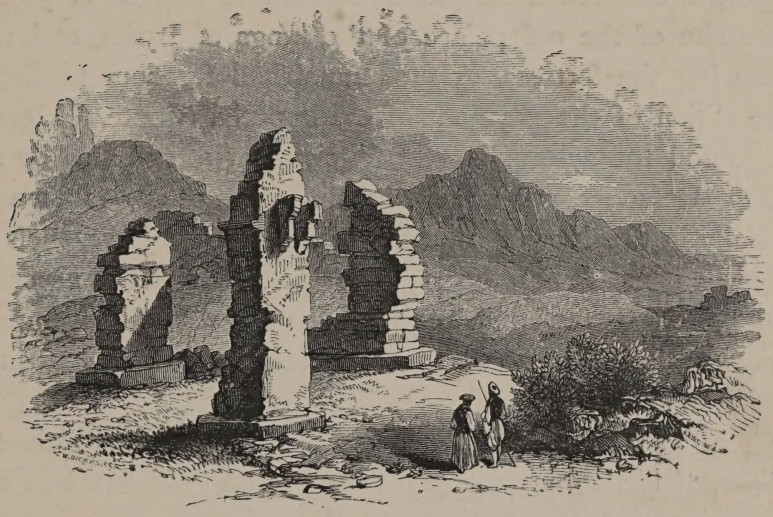
The thread of its history may be traced at this period in Xenophon's "History of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand." The old Lydian capital of Sardis still remained the seat of government for the Persian satrapy, to which the country of the Seven Churches was assigned. It was at Sardis that Xenophon met the satrap Cyrus the younger, and joined him, with his mercenaries, in the rash attempt to wrest the throne from his brother, B.C. 401. From Sardis the army crossed the

RUINS OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT SARDIS.

Mount Taurus to Tarsus in Cilicia. Thence Cyrus led his troops through Syria, and across the Euphrates, till forty miles from Babylon the pretender fell in the battle of Cunaxa. The little band of Greek mercenaries, thus left in the plains of Babylonia, were led by Xenophon, after their original leader had been treacherously murdered by the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, up the course of the Tigris and across Armenia and the eastern portion of Asia Minor, until they reached Trebizond, then a Greek colony, on the shores of the Black

Sea. Not long afterwards Xenophon led another expedition, to aid the Spartans in their war against Persia, through the valley of the Caicus and the country of the Seven Churches.

In the next generation, when Alexander took advantage of the knowledge which the unopposed march of Xenophon through the heart of the Persian empire had given to the



RUINS AT SARDIS.

Greeks of the internal weakness of Persia, we find the coast-line of Asia Minor again the theatre of important events.

From the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war, when Asia Minor fell again under the power of Persia, the historian loses sight of the history of its cities, till they successively yielded to the Macedonian conqueror, becoming, for the most part, no very reluctant subjects. Long unaccustomed to freedom,

it was to them the change from a foreign despot to a ruler of their own kindred. Sardis, still the main station of the Persians in Asia Minor, opened its gates on the approach of the victor of the battle-field of Granicus, without a blow, without even waiting a summons to surrender. Astonished at the impregnable character of the fortifications of the citadel, which he never could have subdued without a long siege, Alexander directed a temple to be built in honour of Jupiter, on the site of the old palace of the kings of Lydia, and, after garrisoning the fortress, granted municipal freedom to Sardis, on condition of the payment of the imperial tribute. He thus inaugurated the system largely followed in after times by succeeding Roman conquerors, who, in most cases,—as we see especially in the New Testament history of the Jews,—left the vanquished nation at liberty to rule themselves, according to their own laws and customs, so long as the imperial supremacy in government and in foreign relations was in no way impugned.

From Sardis Alexander marched to Ephesus, which, torn by internal faction, promptly received him. We learn at once the importance attached to the Temple of Diana at that place, when we find the conqueror, while granting civil privileges to the Greek city, not only demanding no tribute for himself, but assigning the whole revenues which had formerly been enjoyed by the Persians to the shrine of the great goddess of the Ephesians. Before quitting Ephesus to subdue Miletus, Alexander took part in one of the grandest pageants ever witnessed in that gorgeous fane, when, at the head of his whole army in battle array, he proceeded thither in solemn procession, and there did homage to the goddess. Pergamus

and Thyatira had submitted before he reached Sardis. There remained only of the Ionian towns the great city of Miletus, which, close to the sea, and with the Persian fleet of four hundred sail within reach, determined to hold out. But the activity of Alexander's far inferior squadron baffled the Persian plans, and occupied the entrance to the harbour before the admiral of Darius arrived. After a bloody struggle Alexander

RUINS ON THE ROAD TO MILETUS, NEAR EPHESUS.

stormed the fortress of Miletus, and when a body of Greek mercenaries made a stout defence, he allowed them to capitulate, took them into his service, and granted to the remnant of the Milesians the privileges of a free city.

A little incident told by an ancient historian, of a discussion between Alexander and his general Parmenio just before the siege of Miletus, throws a curious light upon the strange power

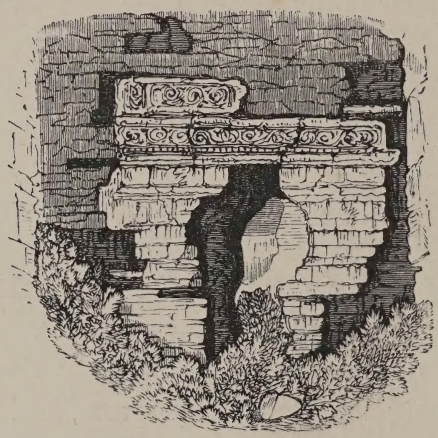
which superstition held over the minds of even the most enlightened and least bigoted heathen. The question was whether the Macedonians should risk a sea fight against the far superior Persian fleet. On the sea-shore, near the rear of the Macedonian ships, Parmenio had seen an eagle, and thereupon presaged victory. But Alexander refused to admit this inference from the omen. As the eagle had been seen, it was a presage to him of victory, but as it was seen over the land, the victory would be of his *land* troops, who should by operations on shore overcome the Asiatic fleet. The anecdote shows how easy it was for a shrewd interpreter to accommodate any omen or ambiguous oracle to his plans or his wishes, and of what vast importance it was to a governor or a general to have a quick-witted and pliant prophet by his side to influence and cheer his men.

From this period the cities of Asia Minor shared the varying fortunes of the conquests of Alexander, passing from one successful general to another, being incorporated into kingdoms which rarely survived the lifetime of their founders. They formed part of the dominion of Lysander. On the fall of the Greek power they were all included in the kingdom of Pergamus, whose kings, as will be mentioned under Pergamus, acquired and, for several generations, held the greater part of Western Asia Minor. When the last Attalus bequeathed his wealth to Rome, they fell, of course, under the imperial sway. Ephesus was especially honoured by the Western rulers, on account of the reverence paid to the Temple of Diana, which had long been held an inviolable sanctuary for every class of criminals. This privilege was so extended by Anthony as to embrace a great part of the city within the area of asylum.

But many campaigns had to be fought before the Romans secured peaceable possession of the great Greek colonies of Asia Minor. King Antiochus received Hannibal near Ephesus, and there the Carthaginian general had frequent interviews with the Roman embassy sent to negotiate with the Syrian monarch. Near Ephesus, too, in the war which followed, several battles were fought between the Romans and Antiochus, till the campaign was decided by the great victory of Magnesia. Cornelius Scipio wintered at Ephesus and the other Ionian cities immediately after the battle, and finally rewarded their ally, the King of Pergamus, with Sardis, Ephesus, Miletus, and the other cities of Asia Minor. In the Mithridatic war, which followed during the supremacy of Sulla, they all threw off the Roman yoke, but were received back by the Romans, on their submission and the payment of a heavy fine, after which they seem to have passively followed the fortunes of the ruling faction of the imperial city, and never again took an independent course in politics. As will be seen in the accounts of the several cities, they rivalled each other in servility, deifying the Roman emperors, and erecting temples in honour of the despot of the day.

Ephesus was the landing-place for Asia Minor. Cicero, when appointed governor of Cilicia, visited these cities on his way. In his letters he gives accounts of his arrival at Ephesus, and of his journey thence to Laodicea, the financial capital of the province, following very much the same route as that subsequently taken by Paul and Barnabas. The cities appear in early Christian history as the centres of theological controversy, rather than as possessing any political importance. Great councils were held at Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea, Nicæa, and

other of the Ionian cities. The temples were partly demolished and partly converted into Christian churches by Constantine and his successors. But the country soon fell into political decay and spiritual death, till it was wrested from the feeble sceptre of the Byzantine emperors. In A.D. 615, Chosroes, king of Persia, overran and conquered the whole of Asia Minor, except a part of the coast-line. Chalcedon was taken, and a Persian camp established for ten years on the Bosphorus,



GATE OF PERSECUTION AT AYASOLOUK, NEAR EPHESUS.

within sight of Byzantium. Most of the splendid basilicas and Christian fanes of the Seven Churches, on which the Eastern emperors had lavished their wealth, were destroyed or desecrated by being devoted to fire worship. The ceremonies of the magi were established everywhere, and thousands of Christians were slaughtered. But in the three famous campaigns of Heraclius, the Persian conquests were all wrested

from them, and the empire of Chosroes ended with his deposition and murder by his son in A.D. 628.

For the next four hundred years Asia Minor was, for the most part, nominally under the Greek empire, and Christianity prevailed; yet it suffered terribly from the repeated inroads of Persians and Saracens, till, in A.D. 1074, Soliman, the Turkish sultan, finally rent the whole of Asia Minor, the cradle and nurse of so many churches, from the sceptre of the Christian empire. Ages of war, discord, luxury, and corruption had already done their work. "The wealth of Lydia, the arts of the Greeks, the splendour of the Augustan age, existed only in books and ruins." Soliman established his palace in Nicæa. The divinity of our Lord was blasphemed and derided in the same temple where it had been pronounced an orthodox dogma by the great Christian council. Laodicea was made a great Moslem centre. All the churches of Asia were profaned. The Greek Christians could only exercise their religion on the hard conditions of tribute and servitude. Their daughters were everywhere at the mercy of the Turks, and their sons were seized and circumcised before their eyes, and compelled to conform to Mohammedanism.

For a time, indeed, the Turkish kingdom was broken, when the Crusading host, led by Raymond, Robert of Normandy, Godfrey, and Tancred, in A.D. 1097, boldly invaded Asia Minor, besieged and stormed the fortress of Nice, and then marched towards Syria through a wasted land and deserted towns, after a hard-fought battle and complete victory over the Turks near Dorylæum in Phrygia. But the Christian restoration was short-lived, and long before the Crusaders had been expelled from Palestine, Asia Minor was again in Moslem fetters, Turks

overrunning the west, and Kurds pressing from the eastern frontier, till Orchan the Ottoman established the Turkish capital of Asia at Broussa, A.D. 1312, and the ruin of the Seven Churches was consummated. The invasion of Tamerlane, the Great Mogul, in A.D. 1402, was but a temporary change of tyrants; yet it is worthy of remark that the Indian prince kept his camp and court for some months at Smyrna, and from thence set out on an expedition to conquer the far distant Chinese empire. But when he left Asia Minor, he left it without a palace, a treasure, or a king, and till the reunion of the Ottoman empire, twenty years later, the hapless land was overspread by hordes of Tartars and Turkoman robbers. Since then it has lain a soulless carcase under the leaden weight of Turkish rule.

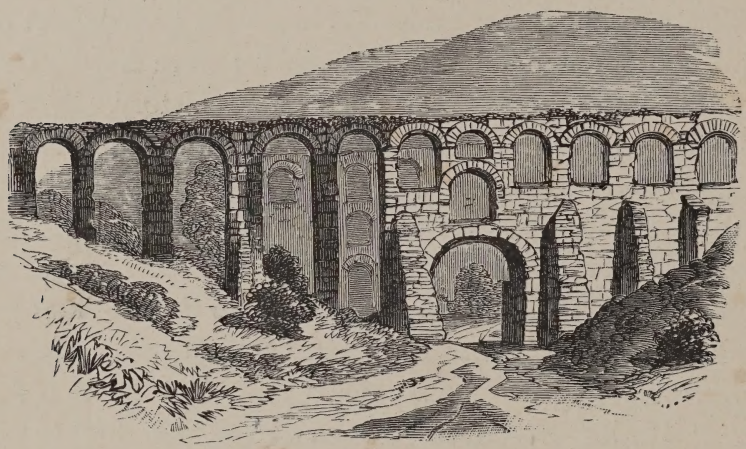
Asia Minor, though now so fallen and obscure that for centuries it has dropped out of the world's history, must yet ever be regarded as the second cradle both of civilisation and of Christianity. It was the first region colonised by Greek settlers, and the foundation of its maritime cities carries us back into the era of myth and fable, soon after the fall of Troy. It was, in fact, the America of Greece, the region into which was naturally drawn not only all the superabundant population, but the more ruthless, bold, and ambitious spirits. Often, too, the bands of defeated but not dispirited political partisans from the various petty states and cities of the mother-land found a refuge here. With a wider territory, and comparatively unlimited space for expansion, the increase of wealth and refinement was much more rapid among the Ionian Greeks than in Greece itself. Not only did their commerce far surpass that of the parent states, but in the arts of

peace, in architecture, sculpture, painting, and poesy, Corinth was the only city which rivalled them. They were the first to cast metal statues, and excelled in painting before the art was known in Greece. They acquired from the Egyptians a knowledge of all their artistic processes, and then applied these with their own skill and æsthetic powers, unfettered by the slavish adherence to precedent which had dwarfed and cramped the original conception. Hence the greater part of the sculptors and painters of early Hellenic art were Asiatic Greeks.

Nor was it otherwise in poetry and history. We have already referred to Homer and Herodotus, the fathers of their respective literatures. So too in philosophy. The oldest school was the Ionian. Its founder was Thales of Miletus, the contemporary of Solon. These Ionian philosophers were the forerunners of the modern investigators into the origin of matter and life. They endeavoured, by such steps as they could find, to mount from a primeval chaos into the later order of nature. Thales attributed the origin of all life to water. Fifty years later, Anaximenes of Miletus held air to be the universal source of life. He was followed by Heraclitus of Ephesus, who preferred fire, or some still more subtle fluid, and who maintained that there is a single permanent intelligent substance amidst the constant flux of all sensible objects. Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ improved upon this, and approached the idea of the unity of the Godhead, maintaining that there is a supreme mind, distinct from the chaos to which it imparts motion, form, and order. We see in these philosophical speculations that same subtlety of intellect and fondness for metaphysical disquisition which has left its impress on Oriental Christianity, rending the Eastern church by

schisms, the grounds of which are scarcely appreciable by ordinary Western minds, and which fills the pages of ecclesiastical history with barren and profitless controversy.

Equally extensive and varied are the stores of archæological remains—fragmentary, alas! for the most part, but full of interest, and forming a sculptured commentary on the history

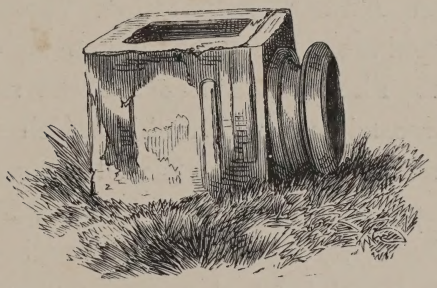


REMAINS OF AQUEDUCT NEAR SMYRNA.

of Asia Minor. These may be grouped into three great classes—the pre-historic, the classic, and the Byzantine.

The pre-historic archæology of the country has scarcely yet been examined. The famous mounds of Sardis, the tombs of the Lydian kings, which will be mentioned in their place, are well known, having been described by Herodotus, but to this day they remain, happily, unrifled. It is only recently that close attention has been drawn to the numerous Phrygian and Oriental sculptures, many of which were noticed by Fellowes and by Hamilton.

An American missionary, Dr. Van Lennep, has lately, in a most interesting journal of "Travels in Asia Minor,"[1] given us much fuller details of these extraordinary monuments, left by a race or dynasty of the existence of which we scarcely find a trace in history. Some of the most remarkable are colossal rock sculptures at Pterium, of royal personages, processions, priests, and animals. They have a remarkable affinity both to Assyrian and Egyptian rock sculptures, but are of a distinct character, and doubtless belong to the epoch of an ancient



CAPITAL USED AS A WELL-TROUGH NEAR THYATIRA.

Phrygian dynasty. The faces are decidedly handsome and regular, neither Egyptian nor Assyrian, and of the Caucasian type. There are figures of gods, probably the Baal of the Phœnicians, but with the Phrygian cap, marking a national divinity, and also a queen riding on a leopard, the well-known emblem of the Assyrian Astarte, the Astaroth of the Sidonians. Some of the representations seem to point to the hideous custom of human sacrifice. It is worthy of remark

[1] "Travels in Little-known Parts of Asia Minor." By H. J. Van Lennep, D.D. London: Murray. 1870.

that the symbol of the two-headed eagle appears on all these Phrygian sculptures.

But it is at Euyuk that the most remarkable pre-historic remains have been discovered. These consist of a vast temple, somewhat on the model of those at Nineveh, with a peristyle flanked by colossal figures, after the manner of the Assyrian bulls. But the type of the faces and the workmanship are distinct in character from the sculptures of Pterium, and seem to point strongly to an Egyptian origin. Not only the features of the men, but their costumes, their deity—a bull on a pedestal, the monkey—an African importation, human sacrifice, and especially the sphinxes, Dr. Van Lennep thinks strongly support this view. The peculiarities are the same as those on the figure of Sesostris, near Nymphis, which Herodotus states positively to be Egyptian. We have here some light cast on an Egyptian expedition mentioned in Holy Scripture, the conquest of Rehoboam by Shishak, or Sesostris. Sesostris, after overrunning the land of Israel, passed under the Lebanon by the road he constructed in the rocks near Beyrout, where his tablet above the Dog River commemorates his achievements. Pursuing his conquering career by the plains of Issus, the shores of Lycia, then by the passes of Mount Tmolus, by Ephesus and Sardis, he for a time established himself in Phrygia, where this temple, erected to the gods of Egypt, was afterwards adapted by the Phrygians to the worship of Astarte.

The Greek remains of Asia Minor are well known. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Temple of Ephesus, were among the seven wonders of the ancient world, and Lycia alone has been a mine not yet exhausted, which has already filled one of the most important

rooms in the British Museum. Zeuxis and Apelles, the greatest painters of antiquity, are claimed as sons of Asia; and it is not too much to say that most of the cities of the Seven Churches are to this day a quarry of statuary, broken, indeed, and mutilated, but attesting the skill with which the Grecian chisel moulded stone to the ideal of beauty, too often sensuous and voluptuous, like the idolatry of the land itself.

The Christian, Byzantine, and Saracenic remains are equally numerous, though the former have suffered more from the ravages of Turkish barbarism than even the fanes of classic Greece, save when they have been employed for the lime-burner's kiln. But these, and especially the remains of Christian churches, will be more specially mentioned in detail in the accounts of the several cities.

To turn from man and his remains to the physical character of Asia Minor, there is much in its rugged, varied, and mountainous nature to explain the important *rôle* it has played in the world's history. The western part of the country is thickly crowded with mountains, some in chains, and others isolated and irregular. Three Alpine chains run east and west. First is the chain of Olympus, running from the Homeric Ida into Mysia and Bithynia, where it is capped with perpetual snow. Another smaller range, the Temnus, forms the watershed north of the Hermes, and on its slopes stands Thyatira. Then commences the chain of the historic Tmolus, overshadowing Smyrna and Sardis. Another little parallel range crops from the sea at Ephesus, and separates the fertile plains of the Cayster and the Meander; while, south of the Meander and Miletus, the lofty range of Cadmus extends far to the east, till it merges in the Mount Taurus chain overshadowing Cilicia

and Tarsus, and so, running from Asia Minor through the north of Syria, turns to the Euphrates.

Not less varied is its geology, and this, like its configuration, has contributed to the variety of its products. The peninsula resembles in many points the rest of the Mediterranean shores in its geology. The northern part rests on an axis of schistose rocks, of which the northern mountain ranges are composed. The southern parts, as Taurus, Caria, and Lycia, are composed of the same compact white limestone as many of the Greek islands, the prime specimen of which is the Parian marble of the sculptor.

Mount Tmolus and the mountains of the Ionian coast consist largely of micaceous schist and saccharine marble, but continually within a very short distance of the coast-line we find vast volcanic tracts, and everywhere strange contortions of strata, convulsions and intrusions of igneous and volcanic rocks. One district, that to the east of Sardis, is named the Katakaumene, or "burnt-up," being, in fact, like an ocean of lava which had been suddenly petrified in a storm; and craters starting up as sharp and black as though they had but yesterday belched forth their liquid fires. The region exactly recalls the district of Auvergne, in Central France, and of the Hauran, or Bashan, east of the Lake of Galilee. These extinct volcanoes explain also the continuous earthquakes which have devastated Ionia from the earliest period of its history to the present day. Hence the geologist would call it a recent country. Its oldest organic remains belong only to the period of our chalk formation, and the limestones and shales of the chalk have become, unlike those of this country, hard and compact, from heat and pressure, and are often crystalline.

The mountain chains we have described do not seem to be older than the end of the secondary geologic period, while the evidences of volcanic action, the eruptions of lava and basaltic dykes, which everywhere occur, are of the tertiary geologic age. These have often enclosed vast fresh-water lakes, the deposits of which, forming the superficial soil of the country, contribute largely to its fertility by the great depth of the alluvium of the plains.

WELL NEAR SMYRNA.

The mountains are still generally clothed with the primeval pine forests, and Mount Taurus with cedars. Though many of the wild beasts of yore have disappeared, still bears, wolves, jackals, and a few leopards are to be found, which in winter visit the flocks and herds of the shepherds of the plains. While these wild beasts are driven down from the mountains in winter, their forest fastnesses are used as places of shelter by the wild Turkomans, gipsies, and other nomad tribes, who pitch their tents

in summer unrestricted over the vast interior plains, and then return to the caverns and forests for the winter.

There is little to observe on the natural history of the country. It was too long subdued by man for any of the larger species of wild animals to have continued through historic times secure even in the recesses of the mountains. The bison, the aurochs, the lion have long since disappeared. The wild goat, or ibex, may be found on a few rocky heights. The mouflon, or wild sheep, has left no trace. Its birds are like those of the neighbouring regions, less abundant in species than Syria, which contains several southern forms which do not reach farther north, while the mighty range of the Caucasus and the vast plains of Southern Russia contain others for which Asia Minor is not so well adapted. We consequently know of few, if any, which are peculiar to the country, and the most remarkable species seem more abundant either to the east and south of it than in the region itself.

Of its domestic animals we may observe that it is the north-western limit of the use of the camel as a beast of burden, while the Bactrian, or two-humped camel, is found in the east of the peninsula. The Angora goat, celebrated for its fine hair, is still cherished and prized, and is almost confined to Anatolia. The single-humped camel has probably been introduced, or more largely used, by the nomad immigrants than in former times. Even now,—though the Western innovation of railways has preceded settled government, safe roads, police, or any other mark of civilisation, and lines of rail from Smyrna to Cassaba and Aidin bring the products of the interior to the port of shipment,—the long trains of camels compete, not unsuccessfully, with the steam-engine,

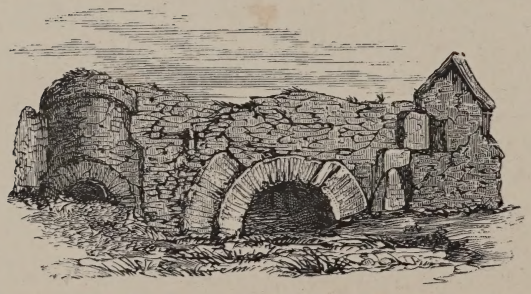
in a country where labour costs little, and where time is not yet recognised as a commodity of value.

The traveller in the East is often struck by the grotesque juxtaposition of Oriental crystallisation and European progress. Nowhere is this more startling than in the railways which he will use in visiting the Seven Churches. English enterprise suggested the idea of a line with

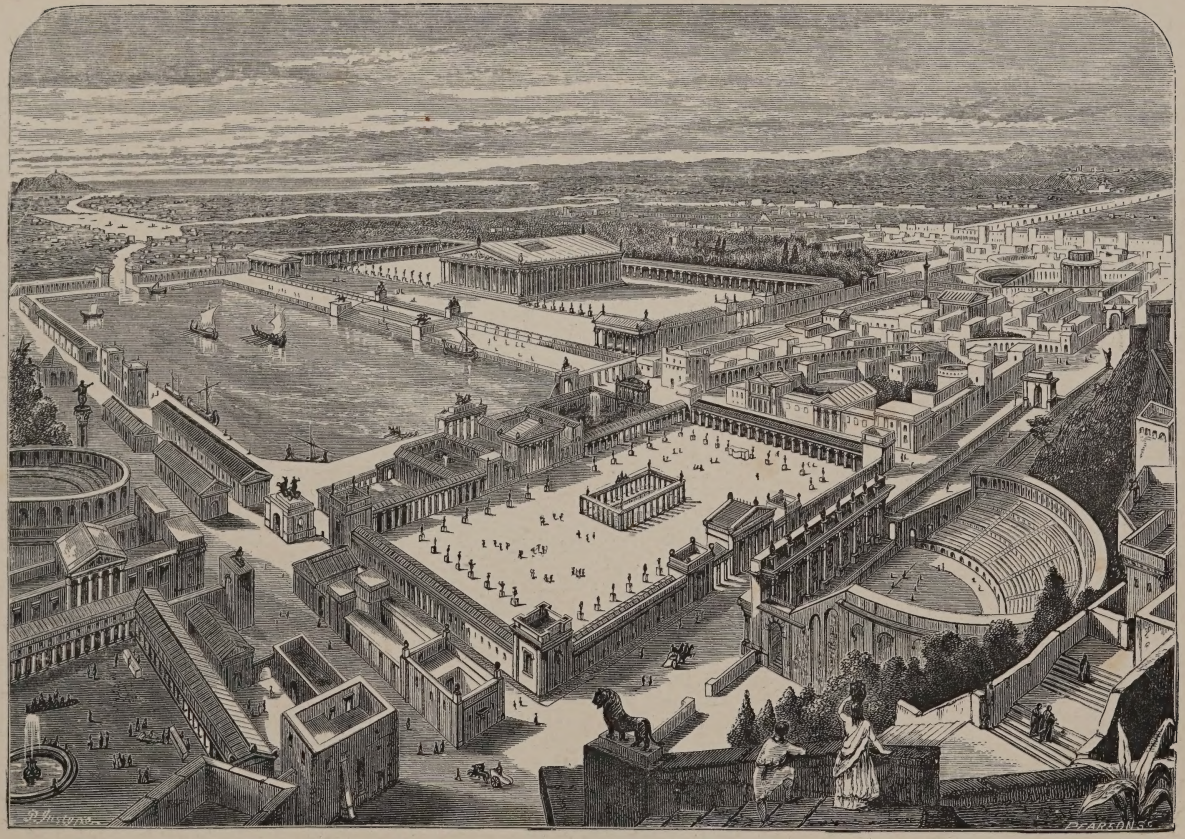
RUINS AT EPHESUS.

branches which should carry the raw produce, the hides, wool, goats' hair, gums, drugs, and especially the cotton of the interior, to Smyrna for shipment. The project has been already partially carried out. The branch to Cassaba from Smyrna conveys the traveller close to Sardis, and, turning south, he will find by his time-table, published in Italian, that he can go by rail in two and a half hours to Ephesus (Ayasolouk station), where there is a newly-erected inn in

connection with the station; and if he wishes to spend a Sabbath morning among the desolate ruins of the city of St. John, return tickets from Smyrna to Ephesus are available from Saturday to Monday. From Ephesus the line turns to the south-east, passing on the way to Aidin (the ancient Tralles) the ruins of Magnesia, where also there is a station, at which every traveller will halt for a day or two to explore these remains, crowded, as is all this land, with associations both classical and Christian.

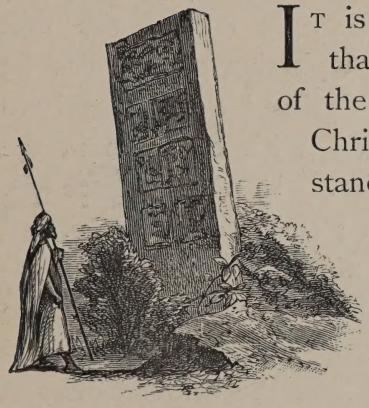


PERGAMOS. REMAINS OF A WATERCOURSE UNDER THE CITY WALLS.



EPHESUS RESTORED.

EPHESUS.



TOMB AT EPHESUS.

It is to themes of far greater interest than the antiquities or the resources of the country that the thoughts of the Christian traveller will recur when he stands on Mount Prion, and looks down, over the seats of the theatre of Ephesus, upon that narrow marshy plain, where the dark reeds wave among broken friezes and marble fragments, and mark the winding course of the little Cayster through the morass which was once the harbour of Ephesus, till it enters the lonely bay, where "no gallant ship with oars" passes by.

Of Ephesus, no less than of Babylon, has the denunciation been fulfilled: "I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." Who can

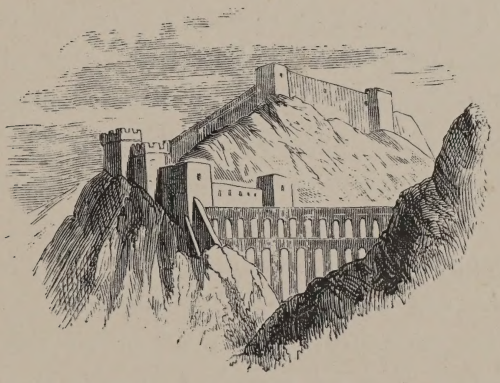
gaze on that scene without recalling the warning, "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"?[1]

Out of the Holy Land itself there is no place more intimately connected with apostolic and Christian history. With the lives of two of the chiefest of the apostles it is closely bound. Here St. Paul remained for the space of two years, so that all they which dwelt in Asia (that is, the small Roman province of which Ephesus was the capital) heard the word of the Lord Jesus.[2] Hence he indited the first epistle to the Corinthians. To the Ephesian church also he addressed one of his chief epistles during his first imprisonment at Rome; and to its chief pastor, his own son in the faith, were written two other epistles. In that theatre St. Paul's companions faced the infuriated crowd of idolaters, and in it, in the next generation, many a saint won his martyr's crown. Here St. John passed many tranquil years, and to it, first of all the churches of Asia, he addressed his epistle from his banishment in Patmos, and here the beloved disciple at last ended his days.

It is interesting to note how many topographical allusions in the New Testament are illustrated as we take our stand on Mount Prion. First there are "the upper coasts,"[3] through which St. Paul having passed, came to Ephesus, when he was about to make that city his residence, where during the space of three years all they that dwelt in Asia (that is, in the surrounding province) heard the word. These are those upper coasts, the high table-land with its

[1] Rev. ii. 5. [2] Acts xix. 10. [3] Acts xix. 1.

rugged edges behind us, the uplands of Asia Minor, through which passed the roads which entered Ephesus by the Sardian and Magnesian gates. The former of these roads, that trodden by St. Paul in his journey, can still be easily traced. In places its very pavement yet remains. Looking eastward over the ruins and the Cayster, we may trace the silted harbour of Panormus and the bay opening beyond it. Into that harbour the apostle entered when he sailed across the Ægean, after his sojourn in Corinth.[1] Close in shore, by that little bay he coasted, when he hurried from Trogyllium



VIEW OF MOUNT PRION, EPHESUS.

to Miletus, on his last free voyage. To our left we may trace the southern coast-road leading to Miletus, by which the elders of the Ephesian church travelled to receive the last charge of their spiritual father at Miletus.[2] In the opposite direction another road winds by the shore towards Smyrna, while to our left we can trace along the crest of the ridge

[1] Acts xviii. 19.

[2] Acts xx. 17–38.

of Mount Coressus the scarcely broken line of ruin which marks the old walls of the Greek city.

But it is most of all round the Temple of Diana and her worship that the associations of ante-Christian Ephesus cluster. Strange that—while the temples of Attica and of Peloponnesian Greece are still the admiration of the world, as they tower on their mountain tops, the fair but lifeless skeletons of a long-perished superstition—the very site of the great Temple of Diana of Ephesus, once one of the world's wonders, is itself a matter of dispute, that the house of her whom once all Asia and the world worshipped cannot be certainly identified.[1] The complete disappearance of this stupendous edifice is accounted for by its proximity to the sea, by which, on the establishment of Christianity, its choicest marbles were easily exported for the decoration of the cathedrals of Byzantium and Italy. It is there we must look for the actual remains of Diana's temple. Some of the pillars of the church of St. Sophia, now the grand mosque of Constantinople, are known to have been brought from hence, notably the magnificent columns of green jasper. But long after it was despoiled of its choicest ornaments, the temple continued to be the quarry for all the surrounding country, and for the Genoese traders.

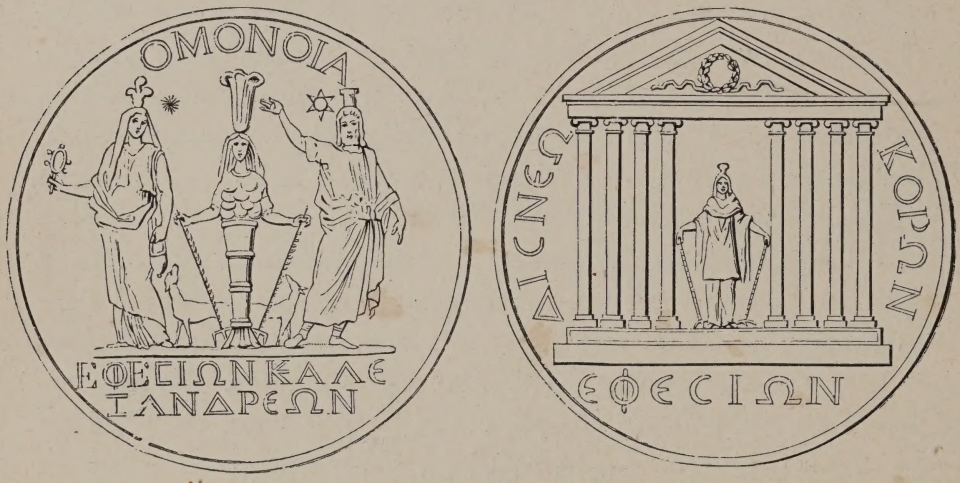
The temple, as it stood when St. Paul gazed on it, was not of great antiquity. The older building was destroyed by fire on the night when Alexander the Great was born, and,

[1] Since the above was written, Mr. Wood has this year (1871) discovered beyond question the site of the Temple of Diana, outside the city, near the point of junction of the roads from the Magnesian and Sardian gates. His invaluable researches will shortly be published.

magnificent as it had been, it was replaced by another of far more stupendous proportions, and of more costly material. It was the first great building in the Ionic style, of which it was the acknowledged model. It was round this temple that the political, municipal, and social system of Ephesus revolved, and we shall find many expressions in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles illustrated by the Diana-worship.

Moreover, not only was this temple the great centre of worship, it was the first asylum or sanctuary of Asiatic Greece, which screened any misdoer who took refuge within its precincts. It was the great bank, or depository of wealth, bullion, and jewels. To the temple those who had precious metals or valuables to hoard, intrusted them for safe keeping in an age of constant warfare and unscrupulous rapine, as a spot which none, not the most reckless conqueror, would dare to profane. It was also the great repository of art treasures in the ancient world. The choicest paintings, the masterpieces of Apollodorus, Apelles, and Zeuxis, were collected on its walls. Monarchs and republics vied with each other in making gifts of the costliest works of art. Its corridors were filled with the triumphs of the statuary's art, by Praxiteles and others, statues which we know modern art has not rivalled. And besides this, it was the repository for trophies, gathered by victors in all parts of the known world, while rarities and curiosities of every kind were displayed there. It was, in fact, the Great Exhibition of the ancient world, and the first of its kind on record. It was truly an exhibition; as many of the works of art were simply deposited like the treasure chests, and exhibited by the owners for a fixed or an indefinite period.

The magnificent pile, with its history and repeated destruction by fire, may well have suggested the architectural allegory of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, written from this place: "As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. . . . If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones,



MEDAL OF EPHESUS.

On the obverse—The figure of the goddess with her hounds, and priest and priestess.

On the reverse—The façade of the Temple, with the inscription **Δις νεωκορων Εφεσιων**: the two vergers or temple-sweepers, translated in our version "worshipper."

wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."[1]

Whatever were the other claims of Ephesus to pre-eminence among the cities of Asia, the principal one was its

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 10-13.

devotion to the worship of Diana. Hence its title, νεώκορος, inadequately rendered in our version, "worshipper,"[1] or in the margin, "the temple keeper," or "warden," as we might call it, literally the "temple-sweeper" of the goddess. The title was not that of an individual, but was the national boast of the whole people. It is found on the existing inscriptions; it occurs as repeatedly on their coins as *Fidei Defensor* does on ours. It was the word that kindled the enthusiasm of the Ephesians, and this temple was the rallying-point of heathen fanaticism from the time of St. Paul to that of Polycarp.

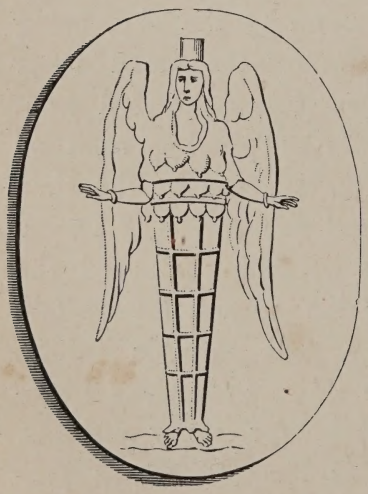
The temple, we are told, was 425 feet long, 220 broad, and its colonnade was supported by 127 shafts of marble, each of them 60 feet high, and each the gift of a king. It is to be remembered that it was open to the sky, being in fact a series of colonnades surrounding the small inner shrine, or holy place, where the idol was concealed from view. It was visited by vast crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the province, especially in spring, and at the time of the games in May, which was called the month of Diana. It was at this time that St. Paul's preaching aroused the fanaticism of the craftsmen. It was the custom for visitors to purchase and take away with them little portable shrines, or models of the temple, which were made in various materials, and provided a lucrative trade for many artisans. Alexander the coppersmith, as well as Demetrius, was probably one of these shrine-makers. The models are depicted on many Ephesian coins. The time of the year being that of the great festival, which had supplanted the old Pan-Ionian

[1] Acts xix. 35.

assembly, explains the vast concourse which was gathered together in the theatre.

But there is a more definite allusion to these games in the title Ἀσιάρχαι,[1] translated "chiefs of Asia." These Asiarchs were honorary dignitaries, appointed to preside over the annual games. The office, one of high rank and much expense, was imposed, like our shrievalty, on persons of wealth and station. That any of them should have been among the friends of St. Paul shows the hold which his preaching must already have taken of the city.

Another incident in the history recalls other peculiarities in the Diana worship of Ephesus. Though a Greek city, Ephesus was on Asiatic soil; and it would seem that Oriental superstitions had become mingled with Hellenic rites. The very image itself was strangely out of keeping with the graceful and symmetrical fane. It was rather like the grotesque idols of modern Hindostan,—a female figure, carved in wood, with an immense number of breasts, and ending in a shapeless block. Her worship, it has well been observed, was "not a vaunting philosophy, but a dark and Asiatic superstition." Hence it was connected with Oriental magic; and the "Ephesian



MEDAL OF EPHESUS, WITH IMAGE OF THE GODDESS.

[1] Acts xix. 31.

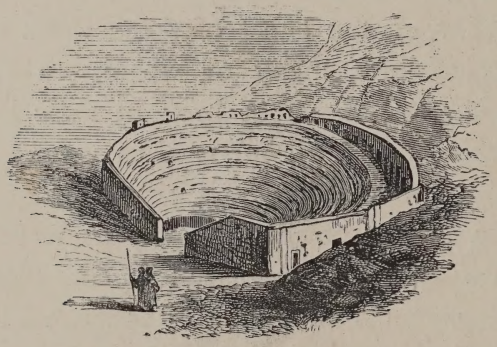
letters," or mysterious symbols, were carried about as charms, and used as amulets for protection against evil spirits. It was against the possessors of this witchcraft that we are told St. Paul was enabled to perform "special miracles" (literally, "no ordinary wonders"), from which we may gather that they were different from his usual miracles, and intended to refute the pretenders to witchcraft. Thus, to show St. Paul's superiority to the ordinary manufacturers of talismans, "from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."[1]

We soon hear of the effect of these signs upon the possessors of magical arts, many of whom, we read, not only abandoned their profession, but brought their books together and burned them before all men; thus publicly proving the sincerity of their recantation, and acknowledging themselves convinced by a higher power. Costly as were all books in that age, these carefully emblazoned collections of mystic sentences, and manuals of enchantment, would command a price far beyond that of ordinary literature, easily reaching fifty thousand drachmæ, or about £2,000 sterling.

With our reminiscences of the temple as connected with St. Paul's history, those of the Theatre of Ephesus are interwoven, and to this also the Scripture allusions are many. About its site, at the foot of Mount Prion, partly scarped out of its slope, there can be no dispute. It remains to this day the only tolerably perfect relic of ancient Ephesus. We can still look down from the hill above on to its circling tiers of

[1] Acts xix. 12.

seats, which show it to have been, next to the Coliseum and the theatre of El Djem, in Africa, probably the largest in the world. From the narrative of the Acts we find it was used not merely for games, but for great popular assemblies. Ephesus still retained, in great measure, its powers of self-government under the Romans: the "town clerk," or keeper of the records, was an official of importance, and the state paper office is mentioned in an existing inscription. The "deputies" (ἀνθύπατοι) are also inscribed on coins



REMAINS OF AMPHITHEATRE AT EPHESUS.

of the city. They were the proconsuls who held the assizes, and these were going on at the time of the outcry against St. Paul:—"the law is open," literally, "the assizes are being held." Thus the town clerk reminds the rioters that they can obtain immediate redress for any proved grievance, and proceeds to warn them of the danger of imperilling the freedom of the people by their tumultuous conduct, as their privileges were only enjoyed by the sufferance of the Roman suzerain. Probably to this scene St. Paul alludes when he observes, "If

after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus."

We have by no means exhausted the illustrations which Ephesus and its history afford of the narrative of the apostolic journeys; but with the scene in the theatre, and St. Paul's affectionate farewell of the church, its direct connection with his life terminates, excepting on the occasion when he sent from Miletus for the elders of the Ephesian church; yet his heart, through all his wanderings and trials, was still with his children there. It was several years afterwards that he wrote from Rome his epistle to the Ephesians; and later still, after his liberation, he despatched from Macedonia his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had put in charge of that church, supplying him with credentials which should induce his flock the more readily to submit to the spiritual authority of their youthful bishop, and should strengthen him in his struggle with the heretical teachers, who had even now arisen in the church. Then, towards the close of his second imprisonment, with his martyr's crown full in view, in his second epistle he exhorts Timothy, with all the earnestness of a dying man, to hold fast the faith, and resist the heresies which threatened to eat like a cancer into the vitals of Christianity.

Whether Timothy was able to obey the call in this last of the apostle's letters, and to visit him in Rome before his martyrdom, we know not. We only know that a few months afterwards, he whose labours and writings have invested Ephesus with a glory and a fame as immortal as the renown of Diana's temple has been transitory, was led forth beyond the Ostian gate of Rome, to leave not only the legacy of

his blood to be the seed of the martyrs that should follow him, but his written words to be the living oracles of the church throughout the world, ages after the Ephesus to whom they were primarily addressed had passed away and become a desolate wilderness.

But it is not with St. Paul only that the ecclesiastical reminiscences of Ephesus are linked. Another disciple—even he whom Jesus loved—seems to hover in spirit over the ruined city. All we know of the later days of St. John is in connection with it; but we have not, as in the case of St. Paul, a crowd of scriptural incidents elucidated by the place and its history. Beyond his apocalyptic epistle, the Bible yields us no evidence of his residence in Asia; but his memory still lingers there, enshrined even in the Turkish name of the squalid village about two miles from the ruins, the only inhabited place in the neighbourhood—Ayasolouk, which is a corruption of the Greek Ἅγιος Θεολόγος "the holy theologian," the name universally given to the apostle in the Oriental church.

The apocalyptic epistle to each church begins by a distinct title of the Son of God, differing in each case, but all taken from the mystic symbols which surround him, as described in the first chapter. Perhaps deeper knowledge might discover something in each appropriate to the special circumstances of that church, as there certainly is in the rewards held forth to the faithful in each. The Lord is described to Ephesus as holding the seven stars in his right hand, and *walking* in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. *Walking* among them, he is active, evermore trimming and feeding with the oil of grace the golden lamps

of the sanctuary. But the church has not so trimmed her lamp. Her first love has grown cold, the lamp is burning dim for want of watching and of oil, and therefore follows the warning that unless the lamp burn brighter the candlestick shall be removed out of its place. Ephesus had left her first love. She recalled the words of the prophet: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown,"[1] when in the first devotion of heart it seemed as though a thankful love would never ebb. But though nothing has changed outwardly, everything has changed within. Therefore the threat is, not extinction of the candle, but removal of the candlestick; not the putting out of the light of truth, but its removal to other places. And this is exactly what has occurred. The grace of God withdrawn from Ephesus has been bestowed on other places. The seat of the church has been changed, but Christ's church still survives.

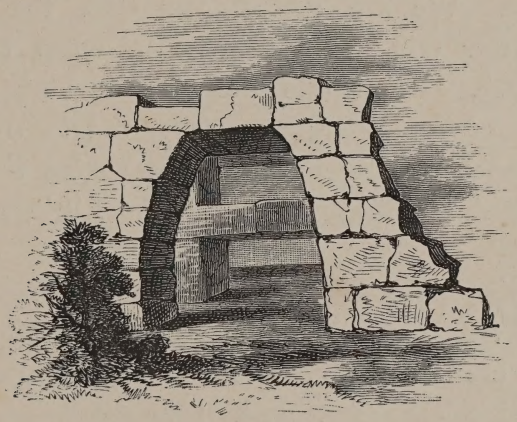
The tender love of the Lord, while it wounds, will also heal, and therefore the meed of praise is awarded where it can still be given: "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Who the Nicolaitans were it is not easy to answer. They could not be that sect which sprung up under the name a century later. Perhaps as many of the other names, such as Jezebel, Babylon, Sodom, are symbolical and mystical, so this may also be. The Nicolaitans seem identified with those that hold the doctrine of Balaam[2]—*i.e.*, those who repeat the sin

[1] Jer. ii. 2. [2] Ver. 14, 15.

of Balaam, and seek to overcome the people of God by like temptations as those by which Balaam seduced them of old. He sought to lead them into the fleshly sins of heathenism, so prevalent in the idolatrous worship of Ephesus, to draw them to eat idol-meats and to commit fornication, to introduce a false freedom—the freedom of the flesh, into the church of God. After the battle against Jewish legalism had been fought by St. Paul, the second danger was that of heathen licentiousness and libertinism under the mask of freedom, by men who, the servants of corruption, turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

The promise to those who have overcome is, "I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Those who have abstained from the idol-meats, from the sinful luxuries of the flesh, shall eat of the tree of life. There is a harmony between the form of the victory and the form of the reward. But there may be a further appropriateness in the promise to Ephesus of "the tree of *life*." The fame, the wealth, the power, almost the very existence of Ephesus, were centred in the worship of Diana. In her temples and rites the thought and life of every Ephesian was bound up. In what sense was she especially worshipped? Diana, or Astarte, was the Asiatic symbol for fecundity, the mother and *life*-giver of all. How comforting then to the Christian, who stood aloof from all this sensuous idolatry, to be reminded of what was in store for him—the *true* source of life, not hidden in the recesses of a heathen temple, not enshrined in the mysteries of a secret and hideous worship, but which is in the midst of the paradise, the open garden of God.

The mosque here, which is of great size, is undoubtedly an ancient Christian church, probably the very same which the Emperor Justinian built on the site of an older and smaller one, dedicated in honour of St. John, and in the erection of which the marbles of Diana's temple were employed. Four splendid monolith shafts of granite inside the mosque are probably among the pillars transferred by Justinian to this church, which has given its name to the village.



GATEWAY IN EPHESUS.

All else which connects St. John with Ephesus is only known in the shadowy and doubtful records of the sunset of the apostolic age, and gives us little certain information as to the extent or duration of his work here.

We know that he must have reached Ephesus after the date of St. Paul's martyrdom; for then Timothy was its chief pastor; afterwards, in the persecution of Domitian, he either fled or was banished to Patmos. On the accession of Nero

he seems to have returned. Here, while combating the heresies which arose, he is said to have penned his gospel, and, according to Eusebius, to have attested the gospel canon. Many a touching tradition, whether fact or legend it matters little, has been preserved respecting his latter days. The caves which we see in the hills around, remind us of the story of his confronting a fierce robber-chieftain whom in days gone by he had baptised; and by his loving firmness touching the conscience of the bandit, and winning him back to repentance. We are all familiar with the well-attested tradition of the old and loving saint, when too infirm to walk or preach, carried into the church—perhaps into that very building of Ayasolouk now perverted to the worship of the false prophet—and day after day repeating the one charge which embodied his Master's teaching, "Little children, love one another."

No tradition points out any spot as the resting-place of the bones of St. John; but in the outskirts of the city are many tombs crowded together near the Gymnasium, doubtless a Christian cemetery, from the symbols on some of the stones, among which the cross is conspicuous; and one with a cross and a bull is said to mark the sepulchre of St. Luke: but these are evidently a century or two later in date.

But the apostle left behind him a more enduring monument than tomb or temple, in the disciples whom he trained at Ephesus; such were Polycarp, Ignatius, and Papias, who continued to the next generation to preserve the fruit of apostolic doctrine in the churches of Smyrna and other cities of Asia.

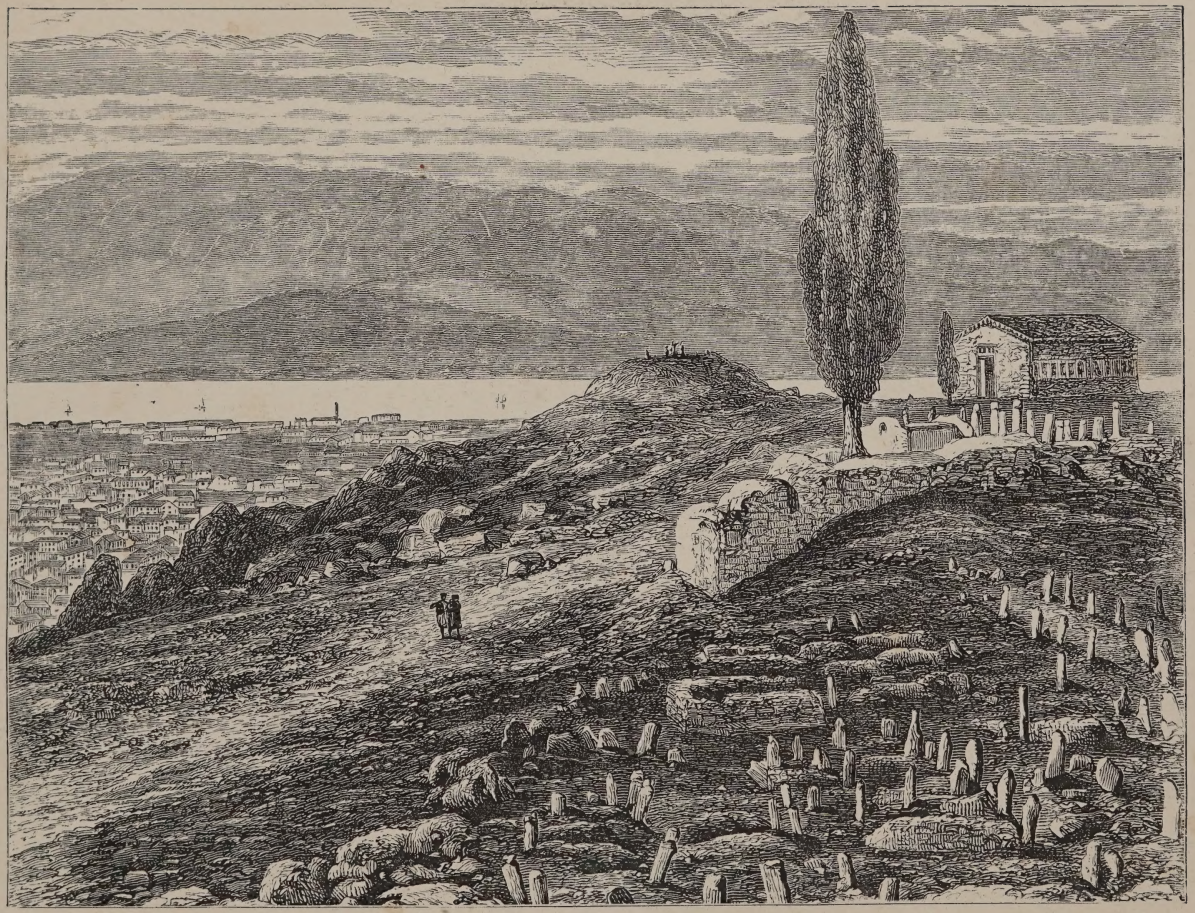
The reminiscences of Christian Ephesus would be incomplete, if we did not carry them down from the apostolic age for more than three hundred years, when, in the year A.D. 431, a general council of the church assembled in the church of St. Mary, the very site of which is now lost, and condemned the doctrines of Nestorius. Thankful as we may be for the decision arrived at by that third of the general councils, it is impossible to read the story of the unseemly wranglings and fiercely retorted anathemas which characterised it without a pang of shame and regret. Worse than these contentions, even, were the riots and actual violence of the lawless mobs which supported the orthodox and victorious party. In unseemly haste Cyril and his colleagues opened the council, without waiting for the arrival of the legates from Italy, or of John of Antioch and the Oriental prelates, who it was known would support Nestorius.

In vain did the Emperor Theodosius attempt to mediate; and at length he dissolved the great œcumenical council of Ephesus, with the stinging rebuke, "God is my witness that I am not the author of this confusion. His providence will discover and punish the guilty. Return to your provinces, and may your private virtues repair the mischief and scandal of your meeting." Two things are worthy of notice in the history of the third general council: first, that it was summoned and dissolved by the temporal power alone; secondly, that the Bishop of Rome claimed no supremacy: he only attended by his representatives, and the decrees were passed before they arrived. The council had neither Celestine, nor any other so-called successor of St. Peter in their thoughts, and acknowledged no *earthly* being, but the

Lord of heaven alone, as the supreme head of the universal church.

But disgraceful as are the scenes which discredit the council of Ephesus, they were far surpassed in violence by those of the second Ephesian council, A.D. 449. Here again the Bishop of Alexandria, Dioscorus, presided, the Roman legate sitting below him. The predominant party, not content with ecclesiastical censure, called in their bands of armed retainers; and so brutally was the unhappy Flavian, bishop of Byzantium, beaten by these hirelings, that he died in a few days from the injuries he had received. Deservedly has the second Ephesian council been known ever since as the "Latrocinian" (that is, the assembly of robbers), the name with which it was branded by Leo, bishop of Rome.

With this sad scene, the history of Ephesus is almost closed. The carnal championship of orthodoxy availed not to preserve its candlestick. Its light soon faded; and it lingered on, a decaying city, exposed to all the horrors of the ceaseless wars and invasions of the Latin empire, until finally the Turkish chieftains Sarukhan and Aidin, in the year A.D. 1312, destroyed it utterly, and the church of St. Mary was laid as low as the temple of Diana.



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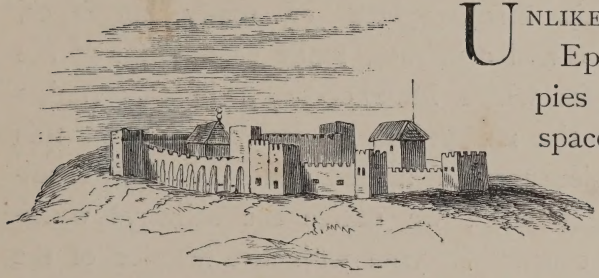


CASTLE AT SMYRNA.

UNLIKE her sister church of Ephesus, Smyrna occupies but a very scanty space in the sacred writings. Never even mentioned by name, either in the travels or the epistles of St. Paul, it is once, and once only, brought under our notice, but that in a position of the highest honour, in the apocalyptic message. With the single exception of Philadelphia, Smyrna is the only church to which that message is one of unmingled approbation. It is surely by more than an accidental coincidence that these two cities alone of the seven have retained their importance, their population, and even their churches in comparative freedom, through the trials and vicissitudes of centuries, to the present day; not, however, without many reverses. Time after time has Smyrna had tribulation. Ten times has the "ornament of Asia" (ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἀσίας) been laid waste by the torch of the invader, and ten times has she risen

SMYRNA FROM THE SEA.

from her ashes, each time not less beautiful than before, till now she stands the undisputed queen of the Levant, an immense city, with its roofs glittering in the clear sunlight of the East, rising tier beyond tier from the shore to the bold hills behind, and a harbour crowded with the shipping of the Western nations. The flag-staffs of the foreign consuls along the shore, the minarets and cypresses in this meeting-place of many languages, creeds, and costumes, make us mindful of the changes which have occurred in this region since the martyrdom of Polycarp. And this consciousness of a new state of things culminates when we notice the railways which now connect Smyrna with the interior of the country.

Let us, however, review the history of the old city before we come down to the Smyrna of our own days. The history of Smyrna, it may be said, brings before us in epitome the story of the Greek race through all time, from the old fables of mythical tradition before Homer sang, through the epoch of Grecian supremacy in arts and arms, in science and letters, through the long desperate struggles which ended in the final triumph of the Crescent over the Cross, to the less bloody, but no less bitter, strife of to-day, when the Crescent seems waning into

annihilation, though the Cross as yet appears not ready to raise its symbol of supremacy, and to take its place as the dominant creed of Asia.

Founded originally by the Æolian Greeks, Smyrna subsequently (before the period of historic records) became a member of the Ionic confederacy, having been captured by stratagem by the people of Colophon, about B.C. 688. It remained independent, not without many struggles, for two hundred and fifty years, when it was, after a desperate conflict, destroyed by the Lydian king Alyattes. Thenceforward the history of Smyrna is identical with that of Asia Minor, liable to the same vicissitudes, enslaved by Lydian and Persian in turn, and only emancipated to wear a heavier yoke under the democratic tyranny of Athens, and afterwards of Rome. It was not, however, until four hundred years had elapsed that it resumed the importance it had attained before its destruction by the King of Lydia. During all this period it remained unfortified and open, until Lysimachus completed the design of Alexander the Great, and built a new city, about three miles south of the site of the ancient Smyrna. It then became and continued one of the wealthiest and most flourishing centres of commerce in Asia Minor; and during the struggles of Rome and Mithridates it secured the protection, and afterwards the favour, of the former. From this time it increased in splendour, and lavished a portion of its wealth not only in building temples to the poet Homer, whose birthplace it claimed to be, but also, with the despicable flattery which disgraced that age of vice and crime, to the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Once sacked during the civil war which followed the death of Cæsar, and twice after-

wards overthrown by earthquake, it was on each occasion rebuilt with increased magnificence, and claimed the epithets of "the Lovely," "the Crown of Ionia." Much of the prosperity of Smyrna was doubtless due to the sedulous care with which its inhabitants, regarding only their material interests, worshipped the rising sun, and habitually secured for themselves the favour of each conqueror in turn. As they profanely worshipped Tiberius, their fathers had given to Antiochus the blasphemous title of "God and Saviour," and to his mother that of "Venus of Victory." So when Mithridates was in the zenith of his power, they stamped his head upon their coins; but the tide had scarcely turned against him when they erected a temple to the deified city of Rome.

As each of the Ionian cities had its favourite tutelary deity and worship, so that of Smyrna was particularly the celebration of the death and resurrection of the Grecian Bacchus, and the mysteries of the god of wine were performed with great pomp. The priests who presided annually over these rites were persons of much consideration, as appears from several inscriptions, and at the close of their year of office were presented with a crown by the municipality. There seems to be a distinct and appropriate allusion to these familiar observances in the apocalyptic message to the Smyrnean church; all the more forcible from the superstitious regard which ancient writers tell us the inhabitants of that city paid to chance phrases and expressions for the purpose of augury. Thus the message begins: "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." The words would strike with peculiar force on ears familiar with the phrases applied in a very different sense to the

revels of Bacchus. So also the conclusion, "I will give thee a crown of life," suggests at once a contrast with the gift of the municipal crown, which conferred a transitory nobility on the leaders of their heathen worship. The passage may with equal propriety allude to the Smyrnean Olympic games, which came round every five years, and excited an interest similar to those of Greece, while the prize was, as in them, merely a perishing wreath.

Rich and beautiful as Smyrna was, the wealthy amongst its citizens seem to have been too much absorbed in their gains or their pleasures to give due heed to the preaching of the gospel; for the message of the Lord speaks of the "tribulation and poverty" of the Smyrnean church, though rich in the possession of truth pure and undefiled, beyond most of its neighbours. Suffering was in store for that tried and oppressed band, and they are cheered under it by heavenly consolations. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." But there is no rebuke,—no threat of removing the candlestick out of its place, or of the Lord coming to fight against error with the sword of his mouth. The church shall be sifted and tried even as by fire, but it will hold fast unto the end.

And the trial which was foretold was not long delayed. The storm of persecution was, even when the apostle wrote, gathering over the church, and before the next generation had passed it burst with especial fury upon the Christians of Smyrna. The early history of the church is bound up closely

with that of Polycarp, its martyred bishop; and indeed it is only through the records of his life and death that any particulars of its fortunes have come down to us. We know not whether Polycarp himself was the angel of the church to whom our Lord addressed the epistle, but it is not impossible; for a few years later, when Ignatius of Antioch passed through Smyrna, on his way to suffer martyrdom at Rome (A.D. 107 circ.), he was its chief minister, and with him Ignatius held consoling and cheering intercourse. Both had been fellow-disciples and hearers of St. John, and a touching story is told, probably a mere tradition, of the apostle having committed to the care of Polycarp a young man who, once his follower, had apostatised, and become the chief of a robber band, but was accidentally met, and brought again to repentance by St. John, near Ephesus.

So great was the renown of Polycarp, that many writers occupied themselves with compiling various and contradictory memoirs of his early life. The most trustworthy records of him are those left us by Irenæus, who had enjoyed personal intercourse with him. He states that he was instructed by the apostles, and by them ordained and appointed Bishop of Smyrna. So eminent was his fame, that there is scarcely an early Christian writer by whom he is not mentioned; but of his life we have few details till we come to the record of his martyrdom, preserved by Eusebius in a letter from the church of Smyrna to their brethren in other places.

It occurred in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, after A.D. 160, but the date is not quite certain. Several Christians, both of this place and from Philadelphia, had been cast to the wild beasts for the amusement of the populace, and

Polycarp, at the entreaties of his flock, was persuaded to retire to a place of safety, and not needlessly expose himself to danger. Search was made for him, and at length his place of retreat was disclosed by a child, who was put to the torture till it revealed the secret. He had still time for escape, but remained, saying, "The will of God be done." When seized, he melted for a moment the hearts of his captors by his prayers for them, but was dragged to the crowded amphitheatre when the games were nearly ended. On his entry, a loud voice, which the old man accepted as from heaven, exclaimed, "Be strong, O Polycarp, and quit you like a man!"

The proconsul, moved by his age and venerable appearance, urged him again and again to obey the imperial edict, and to swear by the fortunes of Cæsar and recant. The form of recantation required was, "Away with the godless." The aged saint with a sigh looked up to heaven, and said, "Away with the godless." Again the proconsul urged him: "Swear by Cæsar, and I will release thee. Revile Christ." Calmly he replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong: how, then, can I revile my King and my Saviour?" Vainly was he threatened with being thrown to the lions, or being burnt to death; to each menace he boldly replied, "I am a Christian." The populace, infuriated by the brutish sports, and not yet satiated with human blood, cried out, "Away with this man, the father of the Christians, the subverter of our gods, who teaches many not to worship or adore them." They demanded that a lion should be let loose against him. This Philip of Tralles, the presiding Asiarch, refused to do, on

the ground that the games were finished. He had evidently been touched by this example of Christian heroism. But the populace, thirsting for blood, cried out, "Let him be burnt alive!"—and while he stood calmly praying, the people rapidly gathered fuel from the workshops and baths near, in which employment the Jews were foremost. The old man ungirded himself, and took his place among the faggots. When they were about to nail him to the stake he said, "Let me remain as I am; for He who giveth me strength to sustain the fire will enable me also, without your fastening me with nails, to endure its fierceness." Then putting his hands behind him, he suffered himself to be bound, and uttered a touching prayer, which has been preserved, thanking God who had counted him worthy of the honour of martyrdom, for the resurrection to eternal life of soul and body in Christ, and ascribing glory to the blessed Trinity. The fire was kindled, but a strong wind blew the flames to one side, so that he was roasted rather than burned, upon which the executioner was directed to dispatch him with his sword. When the weapon was plunged into his body, the blood which gushed forth quenched the flames, which were immediately rekindled, lest the Christians should bury him with honour. The Jews were especially anxious that the body should be utterly consumed, lest, said they, these people should leave the worship of the Crucified One for this man. On this the epistle remarks on their ignorance, "who imagined that it was possible for us to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who are saved of the human race, or ever to worship any other." As if by anticipation guarding against any sanction of the saint or relic worship of Rome and

Greece, the church of Smyrna proceeds: "We adore him as the Son of God, but we justly love the martyrs as disciples of the Lord and followers of him, on account of the affection they bore towards their King and Teacher."

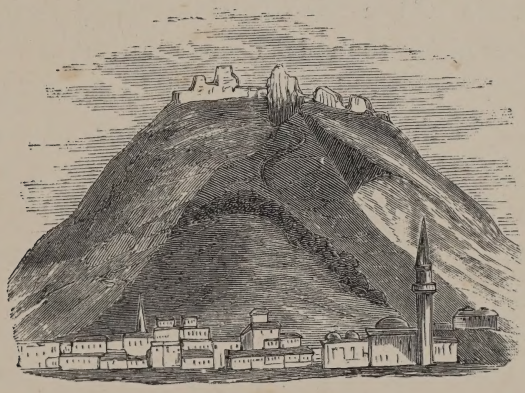
SMYRNA FROM THE SEA.

His ashes were collected afterwards by the faithful of his flock, and deposited in a spot of which the tradition has been uninterruptedly preserved, and which is still devoutly visited by the Greeks of Smyrna. The tomb is pointed out close by the ruins of an ancient church on the hill-side, which rises to the south-east of the city, very near the scene of his martyrdom, and overshadowed by an ancient tall cypress-tree.

The subsequent history of Christian Smyrna is a long catalogue of trials and persecutions; yet the light has never been absolutely extinguished. While the place has maintained a commercial prosperity, chequered at times, but still unrivalled elsewhere in the East, the church has fallen from its former splendour, but is yet in a better condition than any of the other churches. Christianity has ever maintained its foothold even in the most intolerant epoch of Moslem supremacy; the light has been very dim, and partially obscured, but yet the candlestick has remained; and so large is the proportion of native Christians, that the Mohammedans, with whom it is a hated city, term it in scorn "the infidel Smyrna."

Smyrna remained a portion of the Christian Greek empire later than most other parts of Asia Minor. It was first taken by the Turks A.D. 1084. Again it was taken and retaken, and on the second occasion the Turks massacred without mercy all the Christian inhabitants. It remained in ruins till the Emperor Comnenos restored it about A.D. 1220. Again it was taken by the Turks, who were expelled after the Crusades by the Knights of Rhodes. Twice was it captured by them, to be speedily retaken; and the famous Sultan Bajazet invested it in vain for seven years. At length the terrible Tamerlane, with his Tartar hordes, stormed it in A.D. 1402, after a siege of only fourteen days, and butchered all the inhabitants without mercy, building up into a tower with mortar the thousands of heads of the slaughtered Christians. Still the Knights of Rhodes made a last effort, and held it for a time. After their third expulsion by the Turks it was once more stormed by a Venetian fleet, when

the Venetians visited on the Moslems with retributive fury the massacres which they had inflicted on the Christians. Since the first abandonment of all attempts to expel the Ottomans the city has remained under Turkish rule, but with tolerable liberty for the Greek Christians, who enjoy freedom of worship, and are protected from much oppression, formerly by the existence of European factories, and now by the influence of the Christian consuls, and the many Western residents.



RUINS ABOVE SMYRNA.

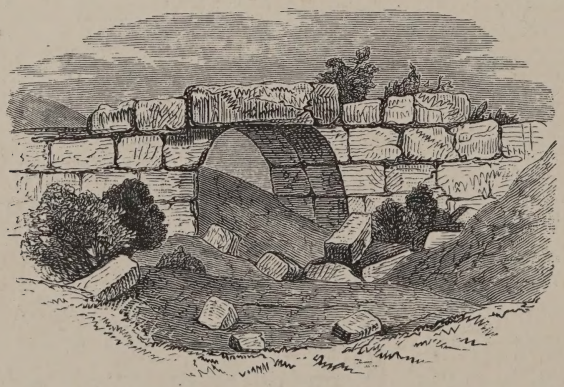
Smyrna has been so frequently rebuilt that, unlike Ephesus, the remains of antiquity are comparatively unimportant. Of old Smyrna (the early Greek city) only a few traces remain, two or three miles inland. Of new Smyrna, as it existed in the time of St. John, the principal relic is a portion of the castle on Mount Pagus. To the west of this the remains of the stadium may be seen, partially excavated in the hill-side, much on the plan of the theatre of

Ephesus; but all the seats have been taken away for modern buildings, except a few fragments, and the arched dens, or *vomitoria*, where the wild beasts were confined for the brutal Roman games. Here, however, we know we are standing on the spot of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and are close to his tomb, which is almost at the entrance of the theatre.

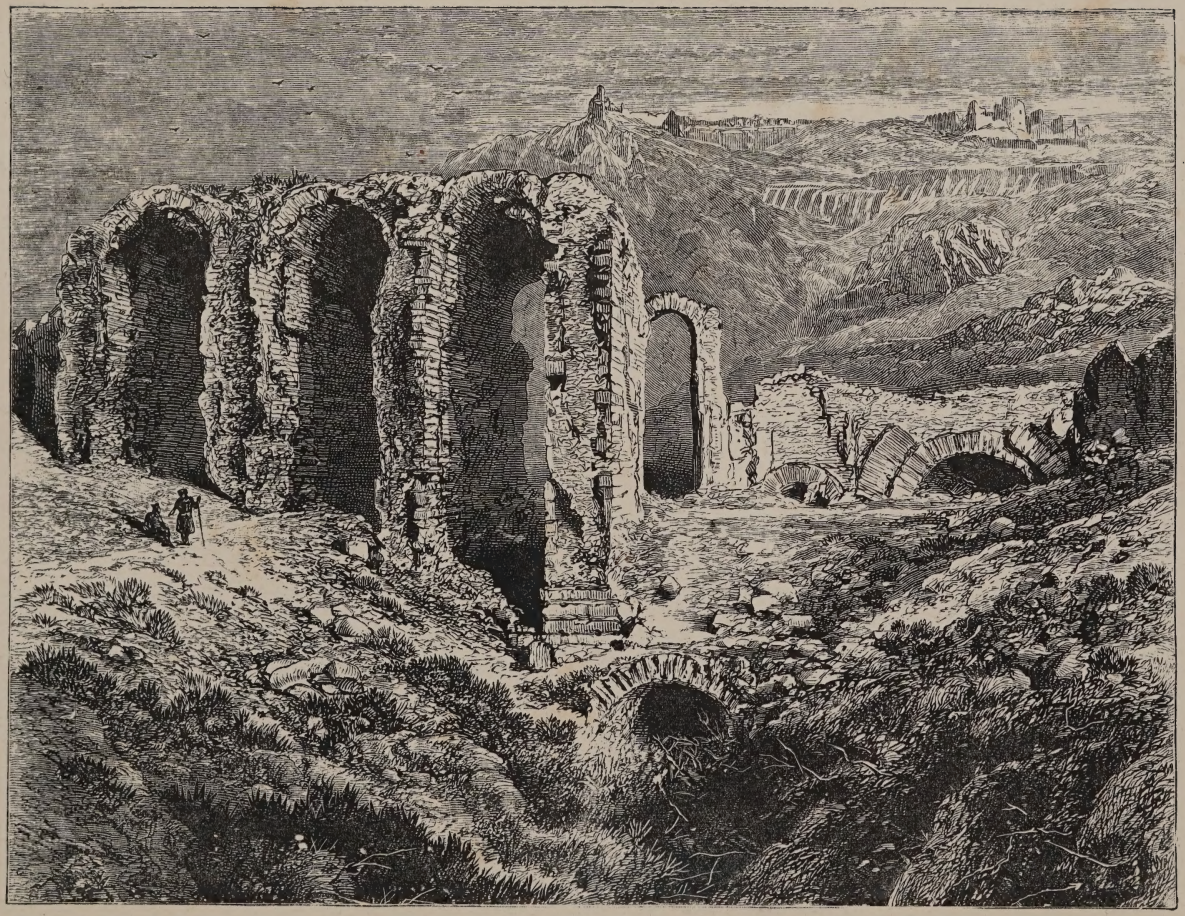
In many of the buildings of modern Smyrna we may see the fragments of ancient sculptures, of columns, and capitals built, with other materials, into the walls of the houses. But there is no trace of the ancient walls, which probably inclosed a space rather less than is occupied by the modern and expanding city. The old land-locked harbour has been filled in, and is now in the middle of the lower city, covered with houses and streets. In the centre of the old castle on the hill-side is a ruined mosque, long disused, but originally a Christian church, the only undisputed Christian relic of the Roman period. Although the remains of antiquity are thus scanty, and the modern buildings, with the exception of the Armenian church, are of no special interest, yet the general view of Smyrna is strikingly beautiful. It is best seen when approached from the sea. The gulf at the head of which it stands is thirty-three miles long and from five to fifteen broad, and is entered close by the bluff headland of Kara-bournou, or "black nose." Numerous headlands and islands intervene, the latter of which once formed the favourite resorts of Levantine pirates. The scenery on the south side is especially grand. Steep wooded hills rise abruptly from the sea, bare and rugged at the top, their sides covered with evergreens and wild pear-trees; while orange groves, with

waving masses of cane-brake intervening, clothe the mountain foot to the water's edge. Higher up the gulf the mountain range reaches the height of 3,000 feet, culminating in two strangely-shaped peaks, called the Two Brothers, the cloud-cap on which is the weather-gauge of Smyrna. The harbour is formed by two long sand-pits running out, the one on the north being formed by the deposit of mud from the classic Hermione, which here flows into the sea; and on these spits the salt-pans glisten in the morning sun as though the harbour were girt by a circlet of brilliants in silver setting; while immediately behind the wide-spreading city rises the bold Mount Pagus, with the dark green groves of the cypress which mark the cemeteries climbing up its base, on either side the castle. Inland, the hills of volcanic origin are rather bare in appearance, but, like Vesuvius, are renowned for their vines; and the soil is eminently adapted for fruit-trees of every kind, the produce of which is one of the staples of trade. From the European steamers and lateen-sailed vessels of the Greeks we pass to the bazaars of the city, where English navvies jostle with stately Turks and wild Georgians; and then having traversed the filthy streets, we emerge, after a walk of nearly two miles, at the caravan bridge on the inland side, and encounter long files of camels with their Turcoman drivers, each animal bearing on either side a bale of cotton from the interior, to be shipped for Liverpool, and gravely moving aside for the gay equipages of the Western merchants; while the grunt of the dissatisfied and ill-tempered camel is drowned by the shrill whistle of the English engine hard by, ready to start on the railway for Ephesus. So grotesquely are East and West here brought side by side!

One of the most conspicuous buildings of Smyrna is the great barrack, interesting to Englishmen as having been used as a sanatorium for our sick and wounded soldiers during the Crimean war. The population of Smyrna is over 160,000, of whom nearly one-half are Christians, chiefly of the Greek rite. Among the Moslems no missionary effort has yet been made with much success, though there is a much more enlightened spirit of inquiry than at Constantinople; but the Church Missionary Society has long had an establishment here, and has done much to enlighten and reform the Greeks, many of whom are diligent readers of the Holy Scriptures; while the Armenians have in many cases evinced a disposition to support a reform of their slumbering church. Let us hope and pray that the church of Smyrna, which has been so long preserved, may yet again trim her lamp, and may become once more a shining candlestick; that, long down-trodden and oppressed, she may rise again in purity, and, faithful unto death, may receive the crown of life.



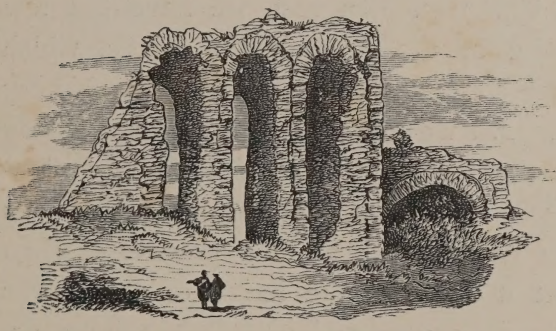
OLD GATEWAY IN SMYRNA.



PERGAMOS. THE ACROPOLIS IN THE BACKGROUND.

PERGAMOS.

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat (throne) is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." *Rev.* ii. 13.



RUINS IN PERGAMOS.

THREE days' journey north of Smyrna, on the banks of the Caïcus, in the province of Mysia, a little river famed in classic story, the traveller comes upon a squalid but populous Turkish town, where, in the narrow uneven plain, the straggling groups of modern dwellings and dilapidated hovels are overshadowed by waving cypress-trees, and massive blocks of ruin, telling of a past magnificence in strange contrast with present meanness. The place is the modern Bergama, shrunk within the ruins of the ancient Pergamum, or, as it is incorrectly named in our version, Pergamos. On a bold hill just behind the modern

city is a long irregular line of crumbling wall, enclosing many clusters of shattered ruins, where broken friezes and half-sunken columns of white marble shine forth in striking contrast with the dark basaltic rock, of which the hill is composed. This was the Acropolis, or citadel, which originally comprised within its walls the whole of the ancient city, and where temple and royal palace once rose majestically side by side, and towered over the valley of the Caïcus beneath. Though fallen from its royal estate, Pergamum has not, like Ephesus, become a desolation, and an abode for wild beasts,—its appearance rather recalls that of the city "trodden down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

The interest which attaches to the history of Pergamum is rather classical than Christian. In fact, we have but few records beyond the notice in the Apocalyptic epistle, which in any prominent manner connect Pergamum with the history of the primitive church. All we know of its Christian history may be summed up in the fact, that from the time of Constantine it was the seat of a metropolitan archbishop, as indeed it still continues to be the seat of a poverty-stricken Greek prelate: and that it fell into the hands of the Turks in the time of the Greek emperor Andronicus Comnenus. In fact, its remains tell us more than its records, for the principal Turkish mosque is still known by the Christians as the old church of St. Sophia, and an immense and magnificent ruin, with chapels attached, now occupied by the Turks, with its apse entire, is the old cathedral of St. John, still so called, and where the natives believe St. John to have baptised the first Christians.

One or two expressions in the epistle to the Pergamene

church, may be illustrated by an acquaintance with the history and character of the ancient city. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat (*lit.* throne) is." Like Ephesus, Pergamum was pre-eminently a city of temples. Long after it ceased to be the abode of royalty, it continued to be a metropolis of heathen divinity. Like Ephesus, it boasted on its coins and in inscriptions to be a temple-keeper (νεωκόρος), and like other Asiatic Greeks, we may be quite certain that the Pergamenes were devoted to a sensuous and licentious worship. This alone would be sufficient to explain the expression "where Satan's throne is." But the reference may be more special. The tutelary deity of Pergamum was Æsculapius, the god of healing. His grave possessed the right of sanctuary, the title of Σωτὴρ (Saviour) was applied to him, and the serpent, among Jews and Christians the symbol of Satan, was his characteristic emblem. In his honour, a living serpent was kept and fed in the temple, while the serpent-worship was so marked a character of the place, that we find this reptile engraved on many of its coins. Again, the practice of the priests of Æsculapius consisted much in charms and incantations, and crowds resorted to his temple, where lying miracles of healing were vaunted to be performed, and which were doubtless used by Satan to obstruct and counterfeit the work of the apostles and the gospel.

Again it was just in such a city as this, a metropolis of paganism, that the question of sacrificial meats would most frequently arise to cast difficulties in the path of the early Christians. Accordingly we find the rebuke, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught

Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." And as Balak had Balaam to seduce him, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." The Nicolaitans are evidently those who fell into the sin of Balaam, as at Ephesus (verse 6), where the seductions were similar. Though the context explains to us their errors, it does not appear that there was then any heretical sect known by this name. Probably like Jezebel (in verse 20), it is a symbolical name. Some have interpreted it from a fancied derivation, "Destroyers of the people." They were distinct from the sect of the Nicolaitans of the second and third centuries, who were a branch of the Gnostics, and who perhaps took the name they found ready to their hands. These were evidently lawless ones who abused the doctrines of grace; who promised liberty, being themselves the servants of corruption, and turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, enticing, like Balaam, his people to eat idol meats, and to commit fornication. The eating of idol meats would, in such a city as Pergamum, be as great a stumbling-block as caste at the present day in India. To refuse to partake of things offered to idols was not only to renounce idolatry, it was more; it was to abstain from almost every public and private festivity, to withdraw in great measure from the social life of the place. To kill and to sacrifice were almost identical, and while the rich feasted his friends, the poor man after making his offering of a share to the temple, sold the rest in the market.[1] But the sin of the Nicolaitans was not the

[1] See 1 Cor. x. 25.

eating of that which had been offered to the idol, and then was sold, or used at private entertainments; it was taking a place at heathen festivals in honour of the false god, and then pleading that they did it in Christian liberty, and that an idol to them was nothing, for they knew the whole system to be a fraud. With this stumbling-block we see how closely joined was the other. Here, as in the decrees of the council of Jerusalem,[1] the two sins are spoken of together, for the impure character of heathen festivals rendered them almost inseparable, especially in an oriental Greek city.

Of Antipas, the proto-martyr of the church of Pergamum, history tells us nothing. The persecution must have been severe from the marked way in which, after naming the faithful martyr, the Lord repeats emphatically, "where Satan dwelleth." We only know that he was not the only one supplied by Pergamum to the noble army. We read afterwards of Carpus, Papylus, and a lady, Agathonice, who suffered gloriously, soon after Polycarp. Attalus too, one of the most distinguished of the martyrs in Gaul, during the persecutions of Lyons and Vienne, was, we are informed by Eusebius, a Pergamene.

The reward which is held out to him that overcometh in this church, seems also to bear a covert allusion to their circumstances. "I will give to eat of the hidden manna." Those who shun for conscience' sake the feasts of idolatry, shall have better food, the bread that cometh down from heaven—the bread of life, of which he who eats shall never hunger and never die, even that Saviour who, now with-

[1] Acts xv. 20.

drawn from sight, like the manna laid up before the ark of the covenant, knows no corruption, reserved in heaven for us.

The promise has doubtless a double fulfilment. There is hidden manna for the believer in this life, though the full flavour of its sweetness can only be realised in the next. Christ is even now "the bread of life," "the manna that cometh down from heaven," of which whoso eateth shall never die. He is even now as "*hidden* manna," which the world tasteth not, knoweth not of: in the sanctuary He is laid up, withdrawn from sight, but yet accessible to those who, "kings and priests unto God," can even now enter by faith within the veil. But there is a yet further fulfilment in store. The manna shall not always be hidden — Christ shall not always remain withdrawn from his people's sight. His glory shall be revealed before men and angels. And even in anticipation of that time, those who have eaten by faith in this life, waiting within the sanctuary, before the throne, delivered from the burden of the flesh, shall enjoy the full fruition of that manna of which they now can only slightly taste the sweetness.

To this the Lord adds: "And will give him a white stone, and in the stone a name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The white stone, perhaps the pure and sparkling diamond, may be placed in contrast with the charms supplied to the votaries of Æsculapius, with the cabalistic characters inscribed on them, and which were worn as amulets to protect them from disease. This spiritual stone, inscribed like the Urim, with a name which no man knew, may set forth the revelation which the Lord will make to his faithful people, of mysteries hidden before from kings and prophets, like the hidden manna and

the Urim, seen by the high-priest alone, but which revelation of the glory of God can only be known by those who have received him.

BERGAMA, THE ANCIENT PERGAMUM.

The history of Pergamum is a striking example of the mutability of political fortune. During the early period of the Persian and Greek wars, it does not appear to have been a place of much importance, though the conical hill rising

above the plain, near the river Caïcus, two of the affluents of which wash its base, and which is navigable from the sea, only eighteen miles distant, must ever have been a strong natural fortification. Xenophon is the first ancient writer who gives us any description of it, and in his time it was settled chiefly by Greeks, whose city occupied only the Acropolis, the now deserted peak, where tradition said the god Jupiter had been born. It was consequently invested with a sort of sacred character. Afterwards Lysimachus, one of the generals and successors of Alexander the Great, after his invasion and conquest of the northern part of Asia Minor, selected Pergamum as the citadel where best to secure his enormous treasury. This he entrusted to the care of Philetærus of Tyana, who after Lysimachus had sacrificed his own son Agathocles to the jealousy of his stepmother, Arsinoë, joined in a revolt against him. Seleucus, king of Syria, then invaded the territory, and the last two survivors of the heroes of Alexander met in battle when over seventy years of age, and Lysimachus fell on the plain of Sardis. But Philetærus was not prepared to surrender his treasure-house to the conqueror, who at once laid siege to the place, and the miserable biography of the successors of the Macedonian king is closed with the story of the assassination of Seleucus the last survivor of the race, by the son of his old friend Ptolemy, after a seven months' ineffectual siege of Pergamum.

Philetærus now contrived to assert an independent position, and founded the kingdom of Pergamum, which after a reign of twenty years he bequeathed to his nephew Eumenes; who firmly established the monarchy against all his neighbours by a signal victory over Antiochus, son of Seleucus, on the plains

of Sardis. The dynasty was continued by his cousin, Attalus I., who held the sceptre for forty-three years, and was the founder of the great wealth and power of his house. He repelled the northern barbarians, who, under the name of Galatians, had already made irruptions into Asia Minor, and restrained them within the limits of the province known by their name. With a selfish prescience of the rising power of Rome, he allied himself with that distant nation, and assisted them in their wars against Macedon, thus giving powerful aid in the establishment of the fourth universal empire upon the ruins of the third. He annexed Smyrna and the greater part of Mysia and Æolia to his dominions, and commenced those sumptuous temples and public buildings of which we may yet trace the shattered ruins. The magnificent schemes which he formed, continued to be carried out by his son and successor, Eumenes II., who by his steady support of the Romans succeeded in obtaining their ratification of his acquisition of all the territories of Asia Minor west of Mount Taurus, after he had assisted them to defeat and overthrow Antiochus the Great, when the Greek kingdom of Syria finally submitted to the supremacy of Rome.

Eumenes has, however, higher claims to a place in history than the mere aggrandisement of his dominion, or his unconscious aid in the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. Besides the magnificent public buildings and porticos on which he right royally lavished the wealth which accrued from his predecessors and his conquests, his love of literature and art led him to expend almost fabulous sums in the collection of a public library, which rivalled that of Alexandria. It is said that two hundred thousand manuscripts were gathered into

this sumptuous collection. The world was ransacked, and carefully transcribed copies of every writing by every known author, were made for the royal *savant*. The great difficulty under which Eumenes laboured was that of obtaining durable material on which to have his transcripts written. He therefore established manufactories at Pergamum for the preparation of skins for this purpose. These smooth and whitened skins, so much more serviceable and durable than the papyrus of Egypt, obtained the name of *Pergamenæ chartæ*, or "Pergamene papers," of which our familiar word "parchment" is simply a corruption. It is not a little interesting, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, to find not only that the identical material remains the best for documents where preservation is of importance, but also that the name of Pergamum is thus crystallised in our familiar language; still more, that to this day the manufacture of parchment is the chief industry of Bergama, and that the banks of the little river Selinus, which flows through the modern city, are fringed with parchment-tanneries in full operation. Doubtless the parchments which St. Paul left with Carpus at Troas, a place not many miles distant, were of Pergamene manufacture. For the first discovery of the art of parchment-making it is said we are indebted to the jealousy of the rival collector, king Ptolemy of Egypt, who forbad the exportation of papyrus, lest the library of Eumenes should surpass his own.

Eumenes was, after a reign of forty-nine years, succeeded by his son Attalus II., whom the Romans successfully defended against various attacks from his Asiatic neighbours and rivals, and who inherited the tastes of his father. He is said to have bid six hundred thousand sesterces, about £4,000, an

enormous sum in those days, for a picture by the famous painter Aristides, and to have given nearly double that price, or one hundred talents, for another picture by the same artist, a proof that the giving of immense sums for the *chefs-d'œuvre* of art is not alone a modern taste. His capital was once taken and pillaged by Prusias, king of Bithynia, whom the Romans compelled to make good the damage he had caused. In his reign the city spread down between the rivers Selinus and Cetius, far beyond the old fortress, and he extended the Nicephorium, or grove of all the gods, in which was a collection of sumptuous temples to all the principal deities of the Greek mythology. Of these, the temple of Venus was of most elaborate beauty, and even the outside façade was inlaid with the choicest and rarest marbles. Apart from the conjecture that the expression in the Revelation, "where Satan's seat is," refers to the serpent worship of Æsculapius, this collection of temples would of itself explain the phrase, while the prominence of the worship of Venus would well illustrate the subsequent allusion to the Moabitish seductions of Balaam.

Attalus is supposed to have been poisoned by his nephew Attalus III., who did not long enjoy his crown; but after a short reign of five years died without issue, B.C. 133, bequeathing by will his wealth, and, as they assumed, his kingdom also, to the Romans. His enormous fortune caused the name of Attalian wealth to pass into a proverb, and nothing more accelerated the demoralisation and corruption of Roman politicians than the fortunes which they continued to secure out of this legacy.

From the time when M. Aquilius was sent as proconsul,

to enter on the royal bequest, the fortunes of Pergamum declined, but not its splendour. "Its prominence," it has been well observed, "was not that of a commercial town like Ephesus or Corinth, but arose from its peculiar features. It was a sort of union of a pagan cathedral city, an university town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who all had a passion for expenditure, and ample means of gratifying it." M. Antony, the Roman triumvir, robbed Pergamum of its choicest treasure, for he granted its magnificent and costly library to his paramour, Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, who had it removed to Alexandria, where, combined with that of the Ptolemies, it remained until, at the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt, the Khaliph Omar barbarously committed the whole collection to the flames (A.D. 642), after it had remained there for more than seven hundred years.

Still the religious eminence of the place remained. The temple of Æsculapius was the resort of invalids from all parts of Asia. Thousands used to offer their sacrifice and dedicate their votive gifts, after which they were to sleep in the porticos of the temple, where it was believed the god would reveal to them in a dream the remedies or the observances that were to cure them. So wide-spread was this superstition that even emperors themselves went and lay down under the fane, waiting for the healing inspiration. It is curious to note how the same superstition, with only the object not the form changed, has remained among both Greeks and Turks in Asia Minor to the present day, where certain churches and temples are supposed to be endowed with healing virtues; like the holy wells of our own country in the days of Romish

darkness. The Greeks light their wax candles before the altar, pay their fee in money, and then sleep in the cloisters of some renowned church, where the prophet Elias is expected to whisper, in the visions of the night, the means for their recovery.

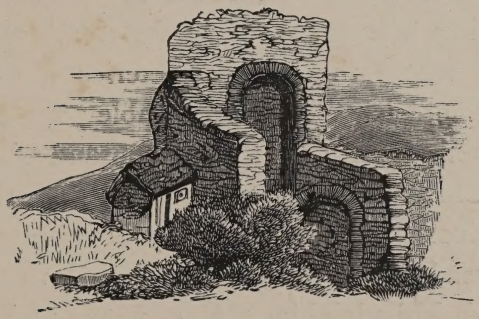
The identification of the various temples of Pergamum is uncertain. That which is generally believed to have been the temple of Æsculapius, being, like the Nicephorium, outside the city walls, stands between the Acropolis and the river Selinus, and has been transformed into a Christian cathedral, called by the Greeks the church of St. John. It is an oblong building nearly two hundred feet long, and about half that breadth, built of brick and white marble, with an apse at one end, evidently added when it was transformed into a basilica or Christian church, and the elevated position of the altar can be plainly seen. It is now roofless, but inhabited by Mussulmans, who have built hovels of mud against the inner walls. But adjoining the apse, standing at each side of the church, are two circular buildings with vaulted stone roofs and doorways still entire, about forty feet in diameter, and seventy feet high. These were evidently connected with the temple, perhaps chapels of the goddess of health, and seem to have been afterwards appropriated to Christian worship, probably as baptisteries. The church of St. Sophia, a Byzantine structure, has been, ever since the Turkish conquest, desecrated to the worship of the false prophet, but still retains its name.

The most interesting ante-Christian relics of Pergamum are the walls of the old Acropolis, a portion of which, of hewn granite or basalt, is a hundred feet deep and its foundation sunk into the native rock. Above it a course of large

substructions forms a platform, strikingly recalling to the traveller the platform of Solomon's temple, now the mosque of Omar, at Jerusalem. Upon this once rose a temple of Minerva, which towered over the surrounding country and commanded a view of the Ægean sea, its base being eight hundred feet above the plain. The surface is strewn with carvings, with friezes, and columns, and many more are sunk in the ground. Near this, but lower down, is the outline of the ancient royal palace, first of Lysimachus and afterwards of the Attalian dynasty. The palace was connected with the Caïcus by an aqueduct, and it extends right into the lower city, even over the river Selinus, which flows through a double tunnel underneath it. This tunnel, supposed to be the work of the first Attalus, is still perfect, and of marvellously beautiful masonry. It is about two hundred yards in length, and the modern houses and bazaar are mingled with the ruins over it. Besides this, there still remain entire five other ancient bridges. The pleasure-loving Greeks had also their theatres, which may yet be traced, but besides these there are very perfect remains of a magnificent and vast Roman amphitheatre, sunk in the slope of a hill, about a mile out of the town, to the west. The "vomitoria," or places where the wild beasts and gladiators were kept for the brutal shows, are very massive. The lower tier of galleries beneath the building may yet be traversed, though half buried in débris. Here probably the faithful Antipas was slain, and many others after him who held fast the name of Jesus and refused to deny his faith. But the amphitheatre has long been a desolation. The stream still flows through it, which, by contrivances

which yet remain in the lower part of the building, could at any time be turned on, so as to flood the arena and gratify the spectators with a sham sea-fight. It is interesting to observe in the utterly deserted and silent city of Gerash, in the interior of the Syrian deserts, a precisely similar arrangement for the amphitheatre there, and to find that there also the little stream still flows uninterrupted through the lonely arena.

Nothing conveys a clearer idea of the enormous wealth of



RUINS OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH NEAR PERGAMOS.

old Pergamum than the vast quantities of white marbles which everywhere strew its site. These blocks, and columns, and sculptures, are crowded on the surface and under it; many of these shafts are thirty and forty feet in length, and yet there are no marble quarries within many miles. The whole neighbourhood is basalt and trap. But for centuries these ruins have served as Turkish quarries, nor for quarries only—the marbles are continually being broken up and burnt for lime. Fragments of statues strew the ground. Large sculptures

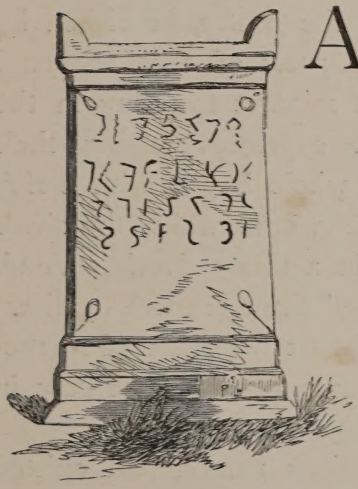
are frequently disinterred, but at once broken up by the Turks, who, unfortunately for the hopes of European collectors, believe that treasure is concealed in the head of these idols, which are therefore at once demolished; and this notion, combined with the Moslem horror of all representations of the human form as idolatrous, has probably destroyed more Grecian statues at Pergamum than now grace the museums of Europe.

Such is Bergama, with its wilderness of ruins, — ruins where once was Satan's seat, in all the pomp and splendour of the gorgeous and sensuous ritual of voluptuous Greece,— but now towering like gaunt "vast fortresses amidst barracks of wood," and where the very cemeteries are full of sculptured relics. There is still a considerable population, variously estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand—but only a few of these are Christians—not more than four thousand; and under the dominant Turkish race they have never enjoyed the comparative freedom of worship permitted to their brethren in Smyrna and Philadelphia. One mean and inconspicuous building is the only church, and even there the worship is often hushed, lest it should exasperate an outburst of fanaticism. Satan still retains his sceptre, though without the glory of his ancient throne.

THYATIRA.

THYATIRA.

'I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." *Rev.* ii. 19.



TOMB NEAR THYATIRA.

A GREAT Roman road traversed the interior of Mysia and Lydia from Pergamum to Sardis, and thence across Mount Tmolus; and the traveller exploring these ruins and solitudes follows, for the most part, the time-worn and dilapidated track. Still all is not solitude. We have seen that Pergamum, though shorn of its ancient glories, is even yet a prosperous town. The road of which we speak may have been familiar to St. John, in many an apostolic journey; for it is in the order in which the cities lie on this route that the churches are named in the apocalyptic epistle. To the modern pilgrim, without appliances and facilities, it is a two days' journey from Pergamum to Thyatira. After a three hours' ride over

the rich plain of Pergamum we cross the classic Caïcus, and ascending a low range of hills, where are several busy villages, we descend on the second day to the wide region which is drained by the Hermus, where a number of gently sloping valleys, each watered by some stream famed in olden story, gradually open upon the plain once dominated by royal Sardis. Diverging a little to the right, the broad valley of the Hyllus opens to view, and, as we look down in spring or summer, we see before us a panorama resembling in kind, though not equal in extent or grandeur to, the traveller's first glimpse of Damascus. The eye tracks across the plain the silver thread which marks the course of one of the affluents of the Hyllus; and in the centre, nourished by its verdure, are crowded the white roofs of a wide-spread Turkish city, with here and there a minaret towering in the midst, and many a clump of tall cypresses raising their funereal plumes on high; while the whole is girt with a rich fringe of orchards and watered gardens, over which the silver mist, drawn up by the sun, hangs in a thin quivering cloud. This is Ak-hissar—"the white castle," the ancient Thyatira.

Unlike its sisters, Thyatira can boast but little of mythologic or historic glories, and the name occurs but rarely in the olden records.

It is said that a city, under various names, had existed on the spot for many generations: but the first distinct mention of the place occurs during the Macedonian period, when Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the Græco-Syrian monarchy, settled here a Macedonian colony, and gave it the name of Thyatira, in commemoration of a daughter (θυγάτηρ) being born to him. Situated on the confines of

Mysia and Lydia, it had probably been heretofore merely an unwalled town, till Seleucus planted a military colony, and gathered within the fortifications the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. After this the name not unfrequently occurs.

AK-HISSAR, THE MODERN THYATIRA.

Antiochus the Great selected it as the first base of operations in his struggle against Roman power (B.C. 190), but was compelled to fall back on Mysia. In the plain between the two

cities he was finally defeated by the two Scipios, when the whole region submitted to the Roman power.

Thyatira must have at this time been a place of considerable trade and wealth, if we judge by the enormous booty which was obtained there by the Romans and their ally the king of Pergamum. After the downfall of the Syrian king, Thyatira was handed over to the kingdom of Pergamum, and remained in obscurity during the continuance of the Attalic dynasty. Nor does it appear to have risen to greater celebrity when it came under the direct suzerainty of Rome, although it boasted a senate, and many corporate guilds of artisans. With a city as with a nation, perhaps happiest is that which has no history; and Thyatira, occupied in trade and manufactures, escaped many of the vicissitudes and catastrophes of its more ambitious neighbours.

Though abounding in ruins, its inscriptions are few, and all that have been discovered are subsequent to the Roman conquest. From these it appears that Vespasian, and after him Caracalla, were especial benefactors,—the former is recorded with gratitude, as having restored the roads in the neighbourhood, a boon which would be thoroughly appreciated by a manufacturing and commercial population.

Amongst the inscriptions are no less than three which afford us a very interesting illustration of the single allusion to Thyatira which occurs in the apostolic history of St. Paul. Excepting the address to the angel of the church in the Revelation, the only mention of the place is in the account of St. Paul's visit to Philippi:[1] "And a certain woman,

[1] Acts xvi. 14, 15.

named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." As Thyatira, though not a place of first-rate dignity, was a Macedonian colony, we may take it as a slight and unintentional confirmation, in a very minute particular, of the accuracy of the details in the Acts, that Lydia of Thyatira is met with in the Macedonian city of Philippi; this being precisely the sort of incident that was likely to happen, from the close and uninterrupted intimacy which ever existed in the social system of old Greece between a colony and its mother city, however distant.

But Lydia was a seller of purple, and the three inscriptions referred to above all speak of the dyers as one of the incorporated guilds of the place. From the earliest times the manufacture of purple dyes, though a Phœnician discovery, was no monopoly of Tyre and Sidon. As early as the time of Homer we find Mæonia, or Lydia, the region in which Thyatira was situated, celebrated for the purple dye manufactured by its women:—

> "As when a Carian or Mæonian maid
> Impurples ivory trappings for the cheeks
> Of martial steeds."[1]

This trade evidently formed an important part of the industrial activity of Thyatira, as it did of that of Laodicea

[1] "Iliad," iv. 441.

and Colosse. Possibly from Lydia the Thyatiran church had its commencement. She had gone forth with her wares to her mother city to sell and get gain; but the hostess of the apostle returned with a far richer treasure than any she had carried thence. "For the merchandise of it (wisdom) is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."[1]

It is not easy to identify the allusions of the apocalyptic address with the local circumstances of Thyatira, of which we know so little. There are, however, some traces of peculiar or special superstitions connected with Thyatira. The old coins of the city are impressed with the effigies of Bacchus, Minerva, and Cybele; but the principal deity of the city appears to have been the sun-god Apollo, introduced by the Macedonian colonists.

Another peculiar superstition may throw some light on the rebuke to the angel of the Thyatiran church: "Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." We are told by Suidas that there was outside the walls, in the midst of an inclosure called the court of the Chaldæans, a small temple dedicated to a sybil, Sambethe, an oriental object of idolatry, said to have been introduced by the Jews of the dispersed tribes from Chaldæa or Persia. It is possible that the expression Jezebel has reference to this polluted union of Jewish and heathen rites, as practised by these degenerate Israelites. Time is given to her and to her

[1] Prov. iii. 14.

followers to repent, as if her worship had not been idolatrous from the beginning, but had become corrupted by intercourse with others. There was probably a large Jewish trading population in Thyatira. There were certainly many Roman settlers, as well as the colonists from European Greece. Latin words are introduced into Greek inscriptions, and many tablets bear Greek and Latin names strangely accumulated on the same individual.

In ancient times the commingling of races was almost sure to be accompanied by a strange confusion of different superstitions, in a state of society where religious observances were entwined with every circumstance of daily life. If then, amongst the Judæo-Christians, there existed the spirit of Sambethe, combining the profession of a purer faith with the superstitions and impurities of oriental rites, the censure and the space given for repentance may be more easily understood.

Perhaps the description with which the epistle begins—"The Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass"—may bear some reference to the popular representations of Apollo, the sun-god, and tutelar divinity of the city. The following verse (verse 19) sets before us the spiritual state of the church of Thyatira as exactly the converse of that of Ephesus. *There* the doctrine was sound, and zeal for orthodoxy was unquestioned, but love was cold; while *here* charity and service, faith and patience, were conspicuous and increasing, or, as we may paraphrase it, the service of love and the patience of faith;—their service or ministrations arising from their charity or love, and their patience founded on their faith, as seeing

Him that is invisible; and so the last works were more than the first works, while Ephesus had left its first love.

But the purity in doctrine of the Thyatiran church was not commensurate with its love and zeal. There can be very little doubt that the same perversion of truth lay at the root of the errors of the Nicolaitans of Ephesus, the Balaamites of Pergamum, and the Jezebel of Thyatira,—all alike setting at nought the obligations of the moral law, professing to follow Christ in the Spirit, but combining that profession with the grossest antinomianism, forgetting that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and plausibly deluding themselves and their followers into the indulgence of the grossest licentiousness.

There is nothing to lead us to reject the view of many commentators, that Jezebel refers to some individual teacher, though the conjecture of Grotius, that it is the wife of the bishop who is thus censured, seems to have no warrant whatever.

If the allusion be to the rites of Sambethe, the life of the historic Jezebel is full of apposite incidents; for she was the first to introduce not merely a corruption of the true worship of Jehovah, as were the golden calves, but to supplant it by the impure celebration of the Sidonian Ashtaroth, the Venus of Asia. Hence Jehu asks, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" To one who introduced similar practices the evil name is here transferred. In the warning, "I will kill her children with death," there is perhaps a covert allusion to the slaughter of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, predicting some signal visitation, by which "all the

churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts."

One more expression in the epistle may have some local reference,—the blessing to those who "have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak." The phrase, "the depths of Satan," would seem to have been adopted by these followers of Jezebel themselves, meaning, probably, as did some of the later Gnostics, that it was lawful for them to fathom every depth of iniquity, by drinking the cup of sinful pleasure to its very dregs, and yet boasting that, while they could give the body to the lusts of the flesh, they could preserve the soul in an imaginary ether undefiled, and so defeat Satan in the midst of his own kingdom. To those who have not thus sought the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil the Lord says, "I will put upon you none other burden" than merely, as the apostles had decided in the Acts, to "abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood; from things strangled, and from fornication," adding, almost in the same words, that they lay on the Gentiles no greater burden than these necessary things, *i.e.*, to continue to protest in doctrine and in practice against these distortions of Christian liberty. Finally, as to the faithful at Ephesus is promised to eat of the tree of life, to Smyrna the crown of life, to Pergamum the white stone and the hidden manna, each probably with an allusion to local circumstances,—so to Thyatira, the city of Apollo, is promised the "morning star," a better than Hesperus, even "the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

Beyond the incidental occurrence of the name of a bishop of Thyatira from time to time in the lists of the synods and

councils of the East, the place disappears altogether from history, until we approach the time of the final struggle between the Byzantine empire and the Turkish hordes. Thyatira then stood prominently forward in its zeal and devotion to the cause of Christendom. While Andronicus Palæologus II. and his grandson were destroying the resources of the Eastern empire by intestine wars and suicidal feuds, the fatal blow at the Christian power in Asia was struck by

RUINS OF THYATIRA.

the capture of Broussa. When he entered its gate Orchan had founded the Ottoman empire, although the glory is attributed in popular language to his father Othman. Andronicus III., hastily crossing into Asia, A.D. 1330, vainly endeavoured to stay his progress. He made a desperate stand at Pergamum; but when he was driven from thence, Thyatira still held firm to the Christian cause. It was only by storm that it was taken at last, after every other city in

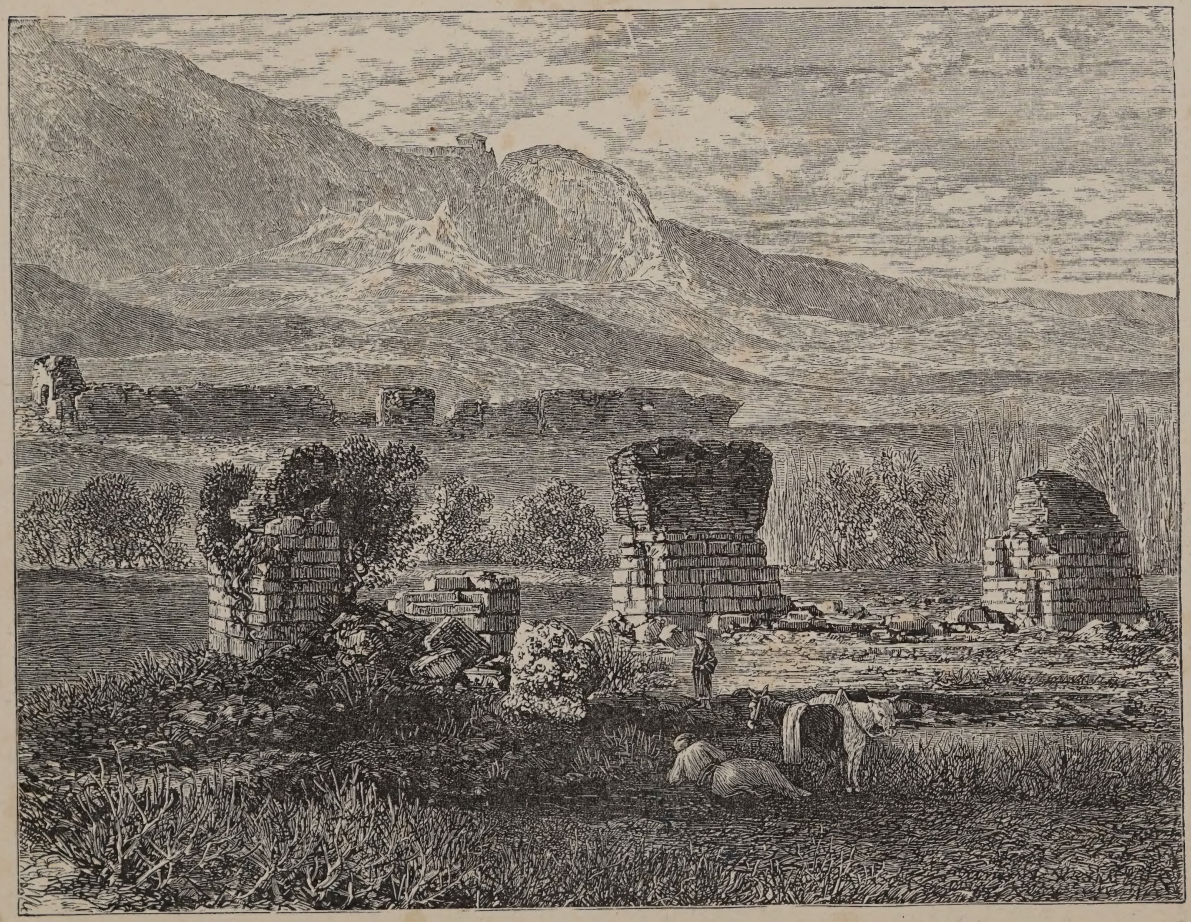
Asia Minor except Philadelphia had submitted to the Crescent, and Andronicus Palæologus was obliged to abandon his attempts to check the progress of the Moslem invasion. A century afterwards Thyatira was ravaged by Tamerlane, and was finally incorporated into the Turkish empire, after the victory of the Sultan Mourad before its walls. From that time its name has been lost, and the Turkish appellation Ak-hissar, "white castle," has been substituted.

Though full of remains of classic and of Christian times—marble friezes built into the walls of hovels, sculptured capitals used as troughs or well-covers—few buildings can be traced among the débris; but the old cathedral church of St. John remains, preserving the tradition of the apostle's visits; and though perverted to the worship of the false prophet, with a tall minaret added, it is still only known by the native Christian, forbidden ever to cross its threshold, as "the Church of the Holy Theologian." It had evidently been transformed from heathen to Christian uses, or, if not a temple, had been constructed from the materials of heathen fanes. One-third of the inhabitants, who number in all about fifteen thousand, still adhere to the Christian faith, from which, in the earlier and less lenient days of Turkish rule, the native population of the neighbourhood rapidly apostatised,—the young men induced by the allurements of military service and exemption from taxation, while the widows and maids of the conquered race were at the mercy of the invaders. Like the inhabitants of Philadelphia, the Christians of Thyatira were able by their valour to extort some terms from the victors; and there is still a Greek bishop resident in the place.

The old trade of the dyer has long since become extinct;

but the Christians, who are the wealthiest and most thriving part of the population, are busily occupied in the cultivation of cotton, which has become the staple of the district. The railway from Smyrna to Magnesia, only thirty miles distant, is about to be extended to Ak-hissar, and we can only pray that, with the revival of its trade and commerce, when once more open to Western influences, the Christianity of Thyatira may revive, and a clearer light illumine the children of those who, for generation after generation, isolated and oppressed, have held fast, with unwavering constancy, at least the Christian *name.*

RUINS AT TYRE.



REMAINS OF THE CHURCH AT SARDIS.

SARDIS.

RUINS AT SARDIS.

On the banks of the little river Hermus, which drains the plain of Lydia into the gulf of Smyrna, is centred the story of Asiatic Greece. Olden poets have sung of that plain as wide and vast. Rich and fertile though it be, it is small in the eyes of those familiar with Western lands, but to one who has been taught not to confound greatness with bigness, that river's banks recall many a mighty deed, and the Hermus waters a plain of imperishable renown in the world's history. As we ascend from Smyrna, and follow up the river's course, we ford many a brook, the very name of which is redolent of classic memories; and, where the plain expands to the widest, a little stream, scarce more than

a silver thread under the summer sun, flows northward from Mount Tmolus, bringing with it the contributions from the many outlying spurs that break up the plain, which here assumes the appearance of a cluster of wide converging valleys. That little stream is the Pactolus, the golden sands of which, once famed in song, attracted of old the adventurers of Greece, but which are now as impoverished as the villages which they lave. Following the track of this little stream for about two hours, we reach a spot where it washes a small jagged peak that pushes out into the plain. For acre after acre, the soil, luxuriant in its growth of thistles and thorny shrubs, is strewn with carved stone and marble fragments. Here and there, a mass of brickwork, a crumbling arch, or a broken column, tells the story of a perished splendour; but the existing signs of human occupation are confined to a water-mill and two or three wretched little hovels. Such is Sart, the living relic of the ancient Sardis, a royal city, and the seat of a powerful empire, ere Alba had given place to Rome. In classic fame and historic dignity, Sardis takes precedence of all her sister churches. But her regal dignity had passed away long before the apocalyptic epistle was written, and, though still a city of wealth and splendour, it could scarcely vie in political importance with Ephesus and Pergamum.

Herodotus, the father of history, gives us the early story of Sardis, which is interwoven with that of the old dynasty of the kings of Lydia. At first, only a collection of wattled huts, it increased in importance, as the kingdom of which it was the cradle overspread the western

portion of Asia Minor. Before the time of Candaules, B.C. 716, the first historical king of Lydia, it had become a fortified city. But its houses, merely thatched with reeds, were frequently burnt, though the citadel—which no doubt occupied the peak that still, now much eroded by floods, commands the ruin-strewn plain—retained its ancient fortifications for several centuries. So strong was this acropolis, surrounded by a triple wall, that when, in the reign of Ardys, B.C. 678, the northern barbarians overran the whole of Asia Minor, and destroyed Sardis, the citadel itself successfully withstood their assault.

It was under the rule of Crœsus, the last and most famous king of Lydia, that Sardis reached the pinnacle of its prosperity. To the golden sands of the Pactolus, much of the wealth of that monarch was attributed. Thither the Spartans sent to purchase the precious metal, in order to decorate the statues of their gods; there gold and silver were first coined, and stamped with the effigies of the sovereign; Sardis in this respect anticipating even the mint of Ægina. But auriferous as may have been the sand of the Pactolus, the real wealth of the place was probably much more due to its political and commercial importance. We are told, that the Lydian kings were the first to establish in their city permanent shops for trade, which, up to this time, had been only carried on at fairs, and by travelling merchants; that the art of dyeing, to which Thyatira owed its importance, was here first invented, and that it was the great market for the wool and woollen cloths, which formed the wealth of Phrygia. The Sardian fabrics, famed in ancient writers, which furnished the

couches and floors of the wealthy, are supposed to have been the originals of our well-known Turkey carpets. So highly esteemed were the finer sorts, that they were reserved for the exclusive use of the Persian king.

One of the noblest lessons taught by the uninspired wisdom of the Greek philosophy, of the vanity of human prosperity, is embodied in the story of Crœsus, the last king of Lydia. Proud of his wealth, he had exhibited his treasures to Solon, the Athenian philosopher and law-giver, in the same spirit of ostentation in which Hezekiah displayed his to the Babylonian ambassadors; and then he triumphantly asked him, whom he thought the happiest of men? Solon gave him the name of an Athenian of humble position, who, happy in his family, had fallen for his country in the moment of victory. The next place he gave to two dutiful sons, who, after winning the prize in the public games, had drawn their mother to the temple, and there died with their honours fresh upon them. Crœsus, astonished that the sage found no place for *him*, was warned of the thousand changes of fortune, and told that a man might be healthy, wealthy, handsome, blessed in his sons, and yet a change might come. Therefore he should call no man happy until he had seen his end, and knew his death. Fourteen years afterwards the Persians invaded Lydia, and, after Cyrus (B.C. 546) had defeated Crœsus in a pitched battle, Sardis was taken by storm, and the captured monarch, according to the barbarous custom of the times, was laden with fetters, and sentenced by the victor to be burnt alive. While on the funeral pyre, he exclaimed three times, "O Solon! Solon!"

Cyrus having inquired the meaning of this exclamation, heard the story of the warning which Crœsus had received from the philosopher. But the pyre was already kindled; touched, however, by the tale, and perhaps some pang of conscience suggesting to him that he too might meet with a reverse, the Persian king ordered the flames to be extinguished, and had the captive brought before him. Crœsus explained how ambiguous oracles had led him to be confident of his power, and, finally, having made his submission to Cyrus, he was attached to his court, and became his faithful friend and follower. Sardis was, after this, absorbed in the Persian empire, and Cyrus, having rebuilt it, made it the residence of the satrap who governed the whole of Asia Minor, including the Greek cities of the coast.

When the Ionians, in the reign of Darius, assisted by the Athenians, and headed by Aristagoras and Histiæus, endeavoured to assert their independence, they took the city of Sardis, which was accidentally burnt down just after its capture. The Persians, however, under Artaphernes, retained the citadel, and the Ionians were compelled to withdraw. But this burning of their western capital excited, more than anything else, the indignation of the Persians, and was the principal cause alleged for the invasion of Greece, first by Darius, and a few years afterwards by his successor, Xerxes, who made Sardis his head-quarters prior to the famous march, which met with the repulses of Salamis and Platæa, indelible in the world's history. From the temple of the goddess Cybele having been consumed in the conflagration at the time of the Ionian attack, the

Persians found a pretext for violating the rules of ancient warfare, and for burning all the temples of Greece during their invasion.

Though Greece and the maritime cities were delivered from Persian rule, Sardis never recovered its independence, but remained an appanage of the Persian empire. Here Cyrus the younger mustered his army, when about to attack his brother Artaxerxes, and it was not until Alexander the Great had invaded Asia and won the battle of the Granicus, that it opened its gates without resistance to the Greek conqueror. In acknowledgment of its complaisance, he restored to its inhabitants their Greek laws, and their right of self-government. He built a temple to Jupiter Olympus, and in other ways enriched the city—of the history of which we know little more in detail until the Roman period. On the partition of Alexander's conquests, it fell to the lot of Antigonus. After the battle of Issus (B.C. 301) it submitted to Seleucus, and afterwards to Ptolemy. For a time it was annexed to the kingdom of Pergamum, and after a siege of more than a year, it was stormed by Antiochus. When the Scipios defeated him at the battle of Magnesia, Sardis passed into the hands of the Romans, and became the seat of the prefect of their province of Asia.

The terrible earthquake in the reign of Tiberius, which has been mentioned in the account of Ephesus, laid low all the public buildings of Sardis, which were restored with increased splendour by order of the emperor. We find from Tacitus, that the Sardians emulated their neighbours in their sycophancy of the ruling powers, and sent an embassy to Rome to claim the privilege of erecting a temple to the

emperor, on the plea of their wealth, the fertility of their soil, and especially the relationship of Tyrrhenus and Lydus, the mythic founders of Tuscany and Lydia.

In the apostolic epistle to Sardis there are fewer local allusions to be recognised than in any of the others. In fact, Sardis was at that time sunk rather in worldliness than in superstition. The material prosperity of the place, quiet and at ease, had infected the church, which was sinking into spiritual deadness and torpor—the lamp of faith was waning and almost extinguished in the hearts of the professors. Hence the Lord addresses them as "He that hath the seven spirits,"—the fulness of all spiritual gifts—able therefore to revive and to recover, from the very gates of spiritual death, those who would employ the little strength they had still retained, in calling upon him. To no other church is so severe a reproach uttered, as this: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Laodicea indeed counted herself rich when she was poor, but we are not told that she had the name of spiritual wealth. Sardis, on the other hand, was not looked upon as almost dead, but had the name and reputation of life. The outer profession of spiritual life was by no means wanting. She seems to have passed for an orthodox blameless church, and yet the show of life only concealed the reality of spiritual death. Other churches had a diseased part; she was altogether benumbed by spiritual stagnation; she was, in fact, a lifeless church. The things that remained were ready to die. She had lost her watchfulness, for she is bidden to become watchful, and the spark of grace was all but extinguished.

That she was reputable in the eyes of others seems im-

plied by the expression in the second verse, "I have not found thy works perfect before God;" for before men she had a "name to live," and may have appeared perfect. It has been remarked that Sardis and Laodicea are the only churches the epistles to which make no mention of any struggle, difficulty, burden or persecution borne for Christ. It could not be that the church of Sardis had openly coalesced with the world. In the days of pagan Rome that was impossible. There could have been no open truce with idolatry, but there may have been a tacit armistice.

Strange, too, that in these two churches there was no open heresy to be rebuked. It would seem as though Satan troubled not himself to infuse the poison of false doctrine into a church, or to agitate it by divisions, so long as it lay quiescent under the effects of a spiritual opiate. Sleeping and inactive, there was nothing in this moribund church to rouse either the antagonism of the heathen without, or to stir up the selfwill of evil-minded men within. The charge is not one of perversely holding untruth, but of heedlessly holding the truth; and therefore she is bidden to "remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." She is reminded of the fervour of her first love, when doubtless "there was great joy in that city," and is bidden by self-examination to recognise her own backsliding. She is warned, "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief"—predicting that the visitation of Christ will be unexpected, and perhaps, too, referring to the story of the Greek mythology, which pictured the noiseless approach of Divine judgments by the avenging goddesses having their feet shod with wool.

Still, in Sardis there were a few names that had not defiled their garments—perhaps the "ten righteous," enough to save the church for the time—names that were more than names, for they had not only the form, but the power of godliness. The word "defiled" (ἐμόλυναν) is different from that used for the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, meaning not so much a robe without stain, as one without filth upon it, *i.e.*, the filth of open sin and carnal defilement. These are not to be involved in the condemnation of the dead church. Their robes, kept clean from corruption, shall be changed for the spotless white raiment of the redeemed and glorified. "They shall walk with me in white,"—shall be clothed in white raiment, clad in the righteousness of Christ, and the glorified body transformed into the likeness of Christ's body. "And I will not blot his name out of the book of life." While the names of the mere professors shall fade away when exposed to the searching light of Him who seeth in secret, the names of these are indelibly written in heaven, and there shall be confessed.

The name of Sardis appears but rarely in early Christian history. One eminent man it produced in Melito, who was its bishop in the second century. Only a few fragments of his writings have descended to our times; but these, and the manner in which his works are spoken of by his contemporaries and successors, make us regret their loss. One valuable fragment is preserved by Eusebius, interesting as being the earliest catalogue of the books of the Old Testament given by any Christian writer. It exactly corresponds with the received canon, excepting that he omits Nehemiah and Esther, both of them being probably included by him under the title

of Ezra. It is very important to observe that not one of the books of the Apocrypha, foisted into the canon by the Church of Rome, is mentioned by him. From his use of the term, "The books of the Old Covenant," we may infer that at the time he wrote (about A.D. 170), the New Testament Scriptures had already been collected into a complete volume. So anxious have been the interpolators of the Apocrypha to avail themselves of some authority from Melito, that they have argued that by the title "Wisdom," which he gives as a second appellation of the book of Proverbs, he intended the apocryphal book of Wisdom.

At the least, twenty works are recorded as having been the products of his pen, the most celebrated of which was his apology or defence of the Christians, addressed to the Emperor Aurelius during his persecution. He also wrote on the Lord's day, on the nature of Christ, on the doctrine of the Incarnation, and on the Christian church. He compiled a summary of the Old Testament, in six books, doubtless very useful in an age when the multiplication of copies was so costly. Of the details of his life and death we know nothing; but he was buried at Sardis before the end of the second century.

About one hundred and fifty years afterwards (A.D. 347) a council was held at Sardis, upon the authority of which great stress is laid by the church of Rome, because it is stated by its fourth canon, that in case of the deposition of a bishop the prelate might appeal to the Bishop of Rome. Not, however, to enter into the question of the genuineness of this canon, which is much disputed, it referred only to a particular case, the granting of a court of appeal to a

deposed bishop, and the council was at best an obscure and local synod, never recognised as of any authority by the church at large.

The temples of Sardis were restored and reopened, and its churches closed, by Julian the Apostate, in his vain effort to resuscitate a defunct idolatry; and in the year A.D. 400, during the first invasion of the Goths, Sardis was ravaged and plundered. It remained, however, a wealthy and prosperous city for six hundred years, until its final capture by the Turks in the twelfth century; but for many years before this it had been exposed to the incessant inroads of the hordes of Islam. These incursions, in which all the male prisoners were slaughtered, and the females carried off, had rapidly diminished the Christian population. Its trade was gone, and the greater part of the surviving inhabitants preferred a more obscure refuge in the mountain fastnesses of Tmolus, until Tamerlane the Tartar carried fire and sword through Asia Minor, in the first years of the fifteenth century, and so utterly devastated Sardis and scattered its inhabitants, that no attempt has since been made to plant even a village on the spot.

As might have been expected from its repeated destruction by earthquake, fire, and war, the monuments of antiquity in Sardis are both scattered and few. The most conspicuous are two solitary columns, with Ionic capitals, on the banks of the river Pactolus, at the back of the Acropolis, which are stated to surpass any specimens of the Ionic style now existing in perfection of style and execution. Their bases are buried in rubbish which has crumbled down from the citadel; but, from their proportions, they must be about sixty

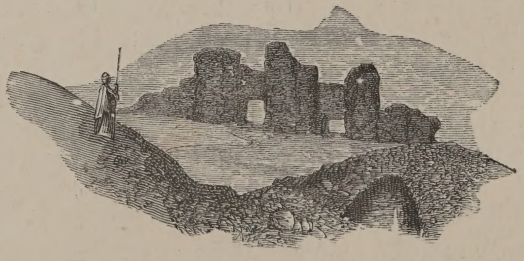
feet high. From their position we know, according to the ancient inscriptions, that they belonged to a temple of Cybele; and they have been frequently attributed to the age of Crœsus, but as Herodotus mentions specially the destruction of this temple by the Ionians, they are more probably the work of Alexander, erected on the same site. As there are no marble quarries on Mount Tmolus the blocks must have been brought from a great distance. At the end of the last century there were six columns still standing, but four have since been destroyed by the Turks for the sake of their marble, to break it up for lime and for tombstones.

On the other side of the Acropolis there are the remains of a theatre, four hundred feet in diameter, with a vast stadium, both facing the plain of the Hermus. But little remains of either, excepting the general contour and a few seats. Of its later remains the most conspicuous are two large buildings, partly brick and partly stone, which have evidently been Christian basilicas or cathedrals, probably of the epoch of Justinian; but beyond their ground-plan, and the spring of their arches, there is very little which can be clearly identified. One remarkable building remains, called the Gerusia, or the house of Crœsus, said to have been a temple converted into an asylum for aged men. Of the churches, the lower one, which is two hundred and fifty feet long from east to west, whilst oblong outside, has within, an apse, or semicircular termination at either end, of which there is no sign externally, resembling the cœna of many modern Greek churches. Both these buildings consisted of brick arches raised upon marble piers, made up entirely of architectural fragments plundered from former buildings.

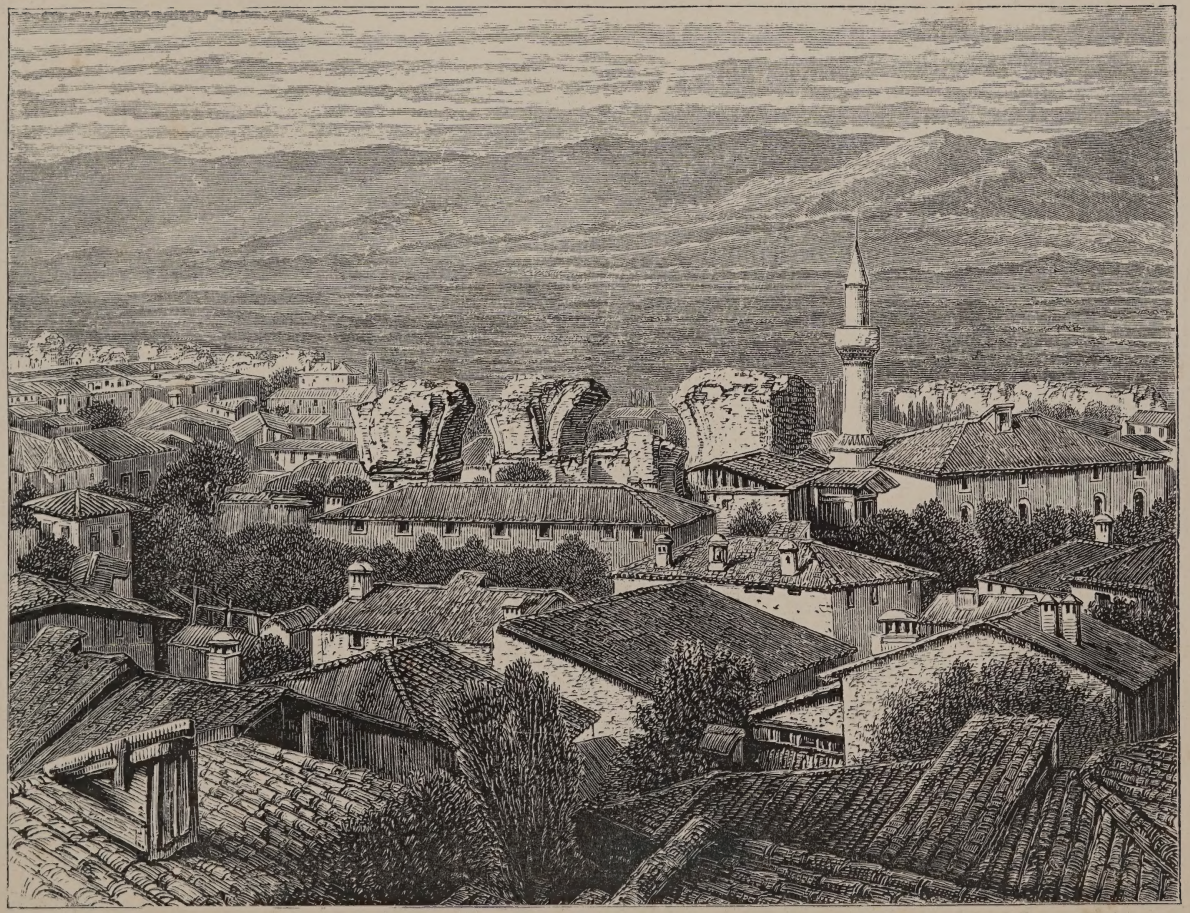
The Acropolis is strangely weather-worn and jagged by the combined effect of sun and rains, and the whole of the ancient summit has been washed down excepting a narrow ridge defended by a double wall and perpendicular precipices, several of the detached pinnacles of which are only held together by the fragments of wall which clamp them. But the view from this Acropolis is magnificent, commanding the broad plain of the Hermus to the north, backed by the wide expanse of the Gygæan Lake and the distant hills, and, to the south, an undulating broken country of hill and valley, of wood and field, fringed in the far distance by the snow-tipped peaks of Mount Tmolus. The whole site of the lower city, and the once-famed Valley of Sweets, said to have been the most beautiful pleasure-ground in the world, are alike strewn with broken and shapeless fragments—now indeed a valley of desolation. A few temporary shepherds' huts may be seen in summer; and the river Pactolus, which once enriched a nation with its golden sands, now renders its only service to man by turning the wheel of the solitary mill where resides the one inhabitant of Sart, himself a Christian, and the single representative of the apocalyptic church, of the seat of a bishop, and the gathering-place of councils.

Any account of Sardis would be imperfect without mention of the burying-place of the ancient kings of Lydia, which ranks among the wonders of the ancient world. On the top of a high plateau, on the other side of the plain of the Hermus, about six miles north of Sardis, is a vast collection of gigantic mounds, known by the Turks as Bin-teppé (the Thousand Mounds), which spread for a vast distance over the plain. It is the mausoleum of the dynasty of Crœsus.

One of these, which towers far above the others, the monument of Alyattes, the father of Crœsus, is accurately described by Herodotus (I. 93), and remains undisturbed by man to the present day. It is three thousand eight hundred feet in circumference and one thousand three hundred feet in breadth. It rises at an angle of about twenty-two degrees, and is a conspicuous object on all sides. Herodotus tells us that it was raised by merchants, artificers, and women, and that there were marking-stones to show how much of the work each had done. When measured, the work of the women proved to be the greatest. Of these boundary-stones one of a conical shape still remains on the summit of the mound; but the inscription, if there ever was one, is completely obliterated by time. These amazing earthen pyramids have hitherto escaped the ravages of invaders, nor is there any trace of their having been ever violated by the hand of man. It is still left to future antiquarians to illustrate by their hidden treasures the arts and funeral customs of a people whose civilisation dates long before that of Greece, and is second only to Egypt and Assyria.

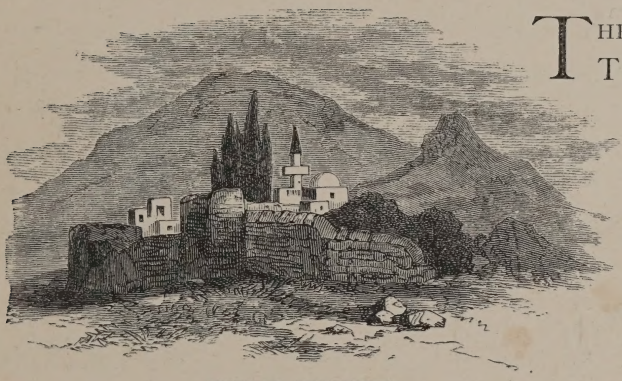


RUINS AT SARDIS.



PHILADELPHIA.

PHILADELPHIA.

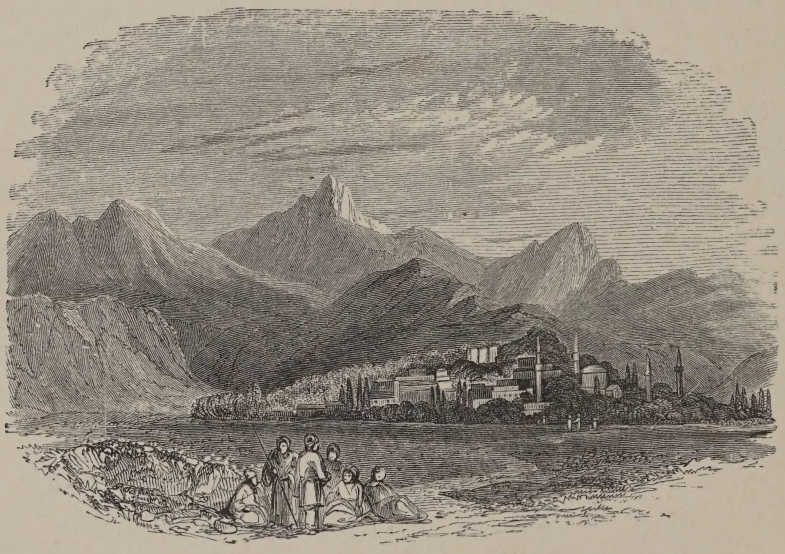


RUINS OF PHILADELPHIA.

THE range of Mount Tmolus is the centre round which most of the churches of Asia Minor clustered. Far away to the eastward, at the edge of the north-eastern slopes of that mountain, about ninety miles inland from Sardis, two valleys converge, that of the Hermus on one side, and that of the Meander on the other. The site is a commanding one; for its central position draws to the spot the traffic of the interior for the coast, whether directed towards Smyrna or Ephesus. Here on the edge of the volcanic region of Asia Minor, Attalus Philadelphus, the second king of Pergamum, founded for commercial purposes, in B.C. 140, a city, which he fortified, and called, according to the fashion of ancient monarchs, after his own name, Philadelphia. Unlike its sister churches, there

is no halo of mythic antiquity about its origin; no olden stories of nymphs or heroes cradled on its site invested it with sanctity, or wove a localised superstition into its civic celebrations; nor could it vie with Sardis or Pergamum in its boast of a past regal or imperial splendour.

Situated on the little river Cogamus, which winds through the valley, and joins the Hermus near Sardis, and on the



PHILADELPHIA, WITH MOUNTAINS BEHIND.

frontiers of Lydia and Phrygia, its importance was simply that of a considerable commercial emporium, and politically it was attached by the Romans to the jurisdiction of Sardis.

The lower hills just behind it are composed of the detritus washed down from the mountains above, picturesquely worn and wooded, and form a vast amphitheatre, from the crest of which there is a magnificent view of the town, with its ruined

walls, and here and there a great block of ancient masonry rising from the midst of a wilderness of gardens and orchards. The country round resembles a billowy sea suddenly petrified. Old streams of lava, with their surface decomposed into rich black soil, may be traced in every direction, clad with luxuriant verdure, here and there interrupted by a bold protuberance, a dark basaltic dyke pushed above the lava. But in front of the town a fertile belt of plain extends, about five miles in width. In early summer it presents the appearance of a gorgeous carpet; for the principal product is opium, and the poppies, white, lilac, and purple, mingled indiscriminately, are in full blossom. The business of collecting the intoxicating drug commences at once. The women and children scratch the green heads with a pointed skewer, when the acrid milk exudes, and soon dries in the sun outside the pod, of a dark brown colour. This is scraped off, and when washed is ready for market without further preparation. But it is a very hazardous industry, and the crop is most precarious; for a single shower falling while the sap is exuding washes off the whole, and will destroy the hopes of the season. Happily for the morals of the people, all the opium is taken by government for the Constantinople market, at a fixed price, and the sale of the deadly drug is strictly forbidden in the country itself.

In former ages the produce of this plain was far more wholesome; for Herodotus mentions it as famous for the manufacture of sugar from the sweet cane (*Holchus sorghum*), which was largely cultivated afterwards by the crusaders in the valley of the Jordan. Through this plain the Persian king Xerxes passed with his army, on his way to invade

Greece. A town named Collatebus, the name of which is now quite lost, seems to have stood on or near the site of Philadelphia. Herodotus mentions it as noted for a sort of confection or honey, made with tamarisk and wheat; and it is worthy of remark, as showing the unchanging customs of the East, that just as parchment is still the staple manufacture of Pergamum, after the lapse of twenty-two centuries, the favourite sweetmeat of Philadelphia is this very confection, still made in the same way by the natives, and called by them "halva." The Greek historian tells too of a plane-tree of surpassing beauty, under which King Xerxes rested, and with which he was so much struck, that he presented the tree with golden ornaments, and entrusted it to the special care of one of his body-guard. The neighbourhood of Philadelphia is still noted for its noble plane-trees (*Platanus orientalis*), which flourish here more luxuriantly than in any other part of Asia Minor.[1]

But while corn and sweet cane covered the plain, the staple, and indeed the wealth of Philadelphia, from its foundation by Attalus II., was the cultivation of the vine on the rocky volcanic hills around. Like the sides of Vesuvius and

[1] As a rather amusing illustration of the importance of actual observation in identifying ancient historical sites, we may mention, that while some geographical writers have argued that Collatebus could not be identical with Philadelphia, because of the plane-tree mentioned by Herodotus, since plane-trees were not likely to grow well in so rocky a region, Signor Svoboda, in the notes to his beautiful series of photographs of "The Seven Churches," recently published by Messrs. Low, remarks, in evident ignorance of this stay-at-home criticism, on the magnificence of the plane-trees which he observed there, as surpassing all others in the region.

Etna, its volcanic soil is peculiarly adapted for the growth of the vine, and the region is celebrated by Virgil for the excellence of its wines. Philadelphia was the market of the wine region of Asia, and its coins indicate this, as they are stamped with the head of Bacchus, or with the figure of a female Bacchanal, though now tangled forests have supplanted the vine. Like other famous wine districts, it has suffered much from earthquakes,—so much so, that Strabo, writing at the time of the Christian era, in the reign of Tiberius, tells us that, owing to the insecurity of the houses, most of the people passed their time in the fields and villages round, and marvels at there being found any so attached to their city as to reside there at all; and still more at the want of foresight in the founders of the place. But, in spite of these dangers, the city still exists, occupying exactly the same extent, and girt by the same crumbling and shivered walls which marked its limits in the Roman times.

Though its continued existence and many circumstances of its history are marvellous illustrations of the epistle in the Revelation, and have even extorted admissions from sceptical writers, yet there is less of direct allusion to the local circumstances of the place in this than in any other of the apocalyptic addresses. One expression, however, may perhaps, without incurring the charge of a fanciful interpretation, be taken as peculiarly appropriate to the dwellers in Philadelphia. The promises of future blessedness to the faithful are couched in different terms in the address to each church, and many of them under metaphors which occur nowhere else in the sacred writings. Thus to Ephesus we have "the tree of life;" to Smyrna, "a crown of life," the complement of the

crown of martyrdom; to Pergamos, "the hidden manna" and the "white stone," the revelation of the holy of holies; to Thyatira, where the heathen were given to the worship of Apollo, "the morning star;" to royal Sardis, the "white raiment;" so to the faithful in Philadelphia is the pledge given, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." What Christian, feeling himself a pilgrim here, could so thoroughly realise the permanence of his eternal home, under the figure of a pillar in the temple of his God, as one whose earthly home, shattered repeatedly by the heaving of the unstable earth, and often rent and overthrown by the earthquake, reminded him by its cracks and fissures of the insecurity of all human buildings? Time after time had all the marble columns of the temples of Philadelphia been laid low. The shattered and gaping walls of this city needed so often to be repaired, that the burden of their maintenance had, we are told, utterly impoverished the citizens. But to the promise of stability was added permanence of residence: "He shall go no more out." He who had so often fled into the open field at the premonitory rumbling; he whose house had so often been deserted when he had camped in the plain, out of reach of the falling dwellings (for the historian tells us how the inhabitants had to live for the most part in the country), he, of all others, could appreciate the promise, "He shall go out no more,"—for no earthquake can move the eternal pillars, no shaking of the strong foundations drive out the inhabitants of the heavenly city.

The same idea of permanence runs through the whole of the Lord's address to his beloved church. "He that is true"

(ver. 7), the very truth (ἀληθινός), not merely true, but the perfect, the culminating truth, in a sense in which none other ever can be, "He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth," (not merely who has the key of interpretation, who opens and explains the dark places of prophecy, but as having the royal key, the symbol of kingly power,) He of whom David was the type, who has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the sole power of binding and loosing, of admitting to or rejecting from, the eternal temple. Vain for man presumptuously to claim this power: its exercise will be judged of by Him who alone has the key of David, and who will redress in his tribunal the wrong-doing of the highest tribunal on earth, that claims to act in his name. When ignorance or hatred has wronged any servant of his upon earth, he stands there to disallow and reverse the erring or unrighteous decrees of men.

But the key of David has power also on earth, for "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:" using here a metaphor very frequent in the writings of St. Paul, but with the addition that man should not prevail to shut again this door against the Philadelphian church, poor and weak in numbers though it might be; for none should hinder his word from having free course and being glorified in them; the more so because they had but "a little strength," were but a little flock of small account in the eyes of men, and poor in worldly goods, unlike their neighbours in Laodicea, who boasted that they were rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing.

Beyond this, there is a promise to Philadelphia of final

triumph over their Jewish opponents, greater and more decisive than even that to Smyrna. To her it was promised that they should not prevail against her, but to this church is foretold a more blessed victory than even that of endurance to the end, for her enemies should come and worship before her feet and know that He had loved her. In short, owning that God was with them of a truth, conquerors and conquered should be blessed alike and rejoice together. The Jews should look on Him whom they had pierced and acknowledge him. The promise seems to have been early and literally fulfilled; for Ignatius, in his epistle to the Philadelphian church, in the beginning of the second century, immediately after the death of St. John, alludes to converts from Judaism in this city, who had learned the love of Jesus, and were now preaching the faith which once they destroyed.

Richer still is the next promise:—"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth." Poor and tried, the Philadelphian church had learned to practise patient waiting for Christ, till he should appear. In watching and waiting they had kept his word; therefore he promises to keep them; not indeed that they shall have no temptation, but rather shall be kept *in* temptation. But they shall be kept from the hour of temptation, which shall be universal, the great catastrophes which were coming upon the world at large to try and test them, God's judgments which put all men to proof, and of which the earthquakes of Philadelphia were as premonitory types. Probably the word "temptation" is used here in the same sense in which it is applied several

times in Deuteronomy to the plagues of Egypt, which brought out the pride and obstinacy of Pharaoh as no ordinary providence would have done.

To Philadelphia, as to Smyrna, is the crown of life promised: "That no man take thy crown,"—and to this church in terms even more emphatic than those to her sister. To her it was, "I will give thee a crown of life." Here the crown is spoken of as already won by the zeal and patience of the little company. With little means accomplishing a mighty work—a crown not of present triumph, but of future glory, is laid up for them above. Those who would strive to despoil them of it, are, of course, not the seekers after a crown for themselves, but those who would beguile them of their reward, the adversaries, who, fallen and discrowned themselves, would eagerly lead others down to a like depth of dishonour. But nothing save the failing of their own faith, backsliding, or apostacy, could ever rob them of their glorious reward.

We may note that while "the crown" is spoken of as already given, the succeeding blessing, of which we have already spoken, "him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out," is promised as future. Their salvation was already assured as members of the church militant, their glorification as members of the church triumphant was yet to come, when earthquakes and persecutions shall be no more. Then the door now set open before them shall be shut for ever, safely to enclose those who shall be for ever with the Lord, for "the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever."[1] And as elsewhere in the Apocalpse we read that the ser-

[1] John viii. 35.

vants of God shall have the seal of God in their forehead, or have the Father's name written in their foreheads, a similar metaphor is applied here: "I will write upon him the name of my God." As inscriptions, and especially charters from kings and emperors, were commonly inscribed on pillars, so on them shall be engraved the charter of their heavenly citizenship, "the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God;" —the continuing city, the city which hath foundations, for which Abraham as well as they themselves looked—and with the gorgeous description of which the sacred canon is closed. Archbishop Trench well observes that the epithet "new" (καινός) sets the heavenly Jerusalem in contrast with the old worn-out sinful city bearing the same name, for this word expresses the antithesis of the new to the old as the *outworn*, while the common word νέος would but express that which has recently come into existence, as contrasted with that which has subsisted long:—thus Neapolis, "the city recently founded." There would, therefore, have been no fitness in this last epithet here, for this New Jerusalem, "whose builder and maker is God," is at once new, in that sin has never wasted it, and at the same time the oldest of all, dating as far back as the promise given after the fall. It is no material city to be let down bodily from heaven to earth, as the Montanists strangely dreamt, and Tertullian fancied, and as other modern interpreters have sometimes speculated, in their inability to translate the figurative language of Scripture into those glorious realities of the heavenly city, whereof those figures were the vesture and outward array.

It is a trite remark that to Smyrna and Philadelphia, alone

of the seven, is the message of the Apocalypse one of unmingled approbation and encouragement, and that these churches alone have maintained their existence and material

MODERN PHILADELPHIA.

prosperity to the present day. As we have already seen, this inference is not strictly accurate; for, while three have indeed utterly perished, two of the others, Pergamum and

Thyatira, still exist, and contain Christian churches, though shorn of their ancient splendour, and sunk in poverty, ignorance, and degradation. Still the towns themselves are as flourishing as most others in Asia Minor, where there is no foreign element to protect the native Christian population. But Philadelphia has, with Smyrna, maintained an independence and a freedom, as well as a degree of prosperity which has fallen to the lot of none of the others. In the case of Philadelphia this is the more remarkable, for, unlike Smyrna, there has been no trade nor foreign element to aid it in maintaining its position.

We cannot trace its history and mark its present state without feeling that the threatenings and promises of God have fulfilled themselves in history not less evidently than in the case of the cities of Gennesaret, of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. Even the historian Gibbon, when recounting the overthrow of the Christian power in Asia Minor, writes on these cities as if *he* almost believed their varied fates to be an accomplishment of the inspired prediction. After recounting the final subjugation of the provinces of Bithynia by Orchan (A.D. 1312, etc.), he proceeds: "The captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia was consummated, and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel—the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation. The desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable

village; the God of Mohammed, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos; and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above four-score years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same."[1]

It is difficult to trace the history of Philadelphia from the date of St. John to the twelfth century. Happy, perhaps, it was in having no history. It is only once or twice incidentally mentioned by the later Greek writers, and not alluded to excepting in lists of bishops by ecclesiastical authors. But in the middle ages it comes into more prominent notice. From the eleventh century, when the northern hordes began to ravage the eastern portion of the empire, it was exposed to incessant assaults, and its country repeatedly ravaged by barbarian invaders. Still it bravely resisted in siege after siege, until, about A.D. 1290, it was captured by the Seljoocides. But its brave resistance, and the determined character of its inhabitants, secured it moderate terms, and they had already begun to combine against their Moslem oppressors, when the invasion of Asia by that marvellous soldier of fortune, Roger de Flor, encouraged them openly to raise the standard of

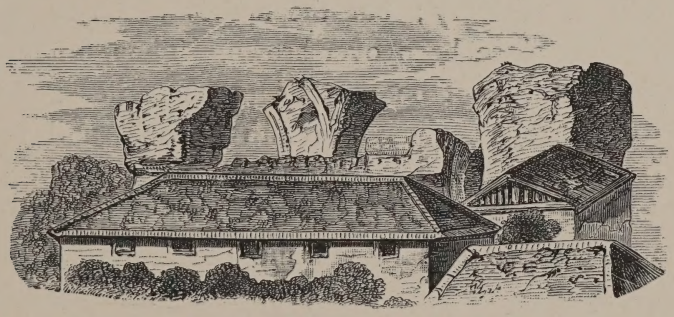
[1] Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," chap. lxiv.

revolt. Roger, who had risen to the chief command of the disbanded armies which sought adventure after the peace of Sicily following upon the terrible massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, was named by Andronicus I., of Byzantium, Duke of Roumania. He at once crossed the Hellespont, and attacked the Turks. In two bloody battles thirty thousand Moslems fell. Part of their army was engaged in the siege of Philadelphia, whither Roger marched at once, raised the siege, and liberated the place. His successes earned for him the title of the Deliverer of Asia. For a time Philadelphia was included with Sardis in the province of Pergamum; but the intestine broils of Constantinople, the assassination of Roger de Flor, by order of Andronicus, and the utter weakness of Byzantium, soon exposed that fair land to renewed devastation. Orchan subjugated the whole of Asia Minor, and in A.D. 1391 Philadelphia remained the last Christian city which had not been taken by the Turks.

Knolles relates, from the Arabic historians, the tale of the last siege of Philadelphia by Bajazet. It was now completely isolated, and its distance from the sea forbad all hope of succour. Still the garrison scorned the summons to surrender, relying on a tradition that the Christian city of Philadelphia should never fall into the hands of the infidel. At first Bajazet forbad his soldiers to plunder the district, and ordered that private property should be respected; but finding the resistance more stubborn than he had expected, determined to drive them to desperation by utterly ravaging the whole country round. After some months the garrison was reduced to extremity, and capitulated on terms of complete submission, saving only their lives and religion. But the saddest part

of the story of the last extinction of Christian independence in Asia Minor is, that to the eternal infamy of the Greeks, the deposed emperor John, with his son Manuel, in their resentment against the emperor Andronicus, led their troops to assist in the siege, and that Manuel and his soldiers were the first to force the breach which compelled the surrender of the town. Notwithstanding this perfidy, and that the city was actually entered by the storming parties, honourable terms were given.

Soon again was Philadelphia exposed to the horrors of a siege, for about ten years afterwards, after the capture of



RUINS IN PHILADELPHIA.

Bajazet by Tamerlane, the Tartar stormed it, but he too, contrary to his wont, spared it from pillage and destruction.

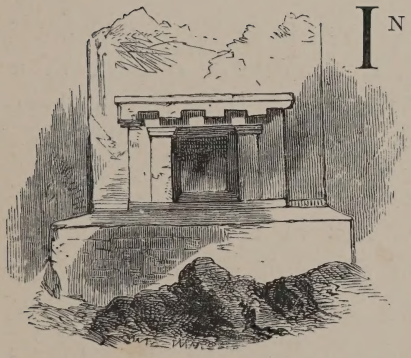
Its very name in Turkish, *Allah-Shehr*, "the city of God," implies that its conquerors have acknowledged in it some special claim to sanctity, or have been convinced of its being under a more than ordinary Divine Providence. Of the whole population, which is about fifteen thousand, fully one-third are Christians of the Greek church. There is still a bishop of

Philadelphia, and about fifteen churches are now belonging to that communion. The Christians have still the free exercise of their religion, and are permitted to ring their church bells, and to have religious processions in the streets—a privilege accorded to no other town in the interior of Asia Minor.

Besides the churches in repair, there are upwards of twenty in ruins, most of which have been destroyed by earthquakes, and their places supplied by humbler edifices. One of these ancient piles forms by far the most conspicuous object in the city. It was undoubtedly the old cathedral, and is still called the Church of the Holy Theologian, *i.e.*, of St. John. Its massive pilasters tower high above the modern buildings, with large blocks of masonry; but the arches which sprung from them have long since been overthrown. Though named after St. John, its date cannot be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Justinian, about the fifth century, and the fragments of many ancient temples have been employed in its construction. The piers and lower parts of the wall are built of blocks of stone and marble, while the arches, of some of which the springs remain, are of brick. Many niches and brackets may yet be seen in the walls, and portions of mutilated inscriptions remain, built into many of the modern churches and houses. The walls of the city can everywhere be distinctly traced, though dilapidated, and in some places completely overthrown. The only other remains of any importance are the ruins of the stadium near the acropolis, the shape of which, hollowed in the side of the hill, can be distinctly traced.

HIERAPOLIS, NEAR LAODICEA.

LAODICEA.



TOMB NEAR LAODICEA.

In its history and in its fate Laodicea presents a startling contrast to its sister church of Philadelphia. From the height of wealth and luxury it has sunk to the very depths of degradation and desolation. While Philadelphia pursued, age after age, the even tenour of her way, Laodicea shot, meteor-like, into splendour and fame, soon to fall "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Far away in the interior, beyond the boundaries of Lydia on the confines of Caria and Phrygia, where the frontiers of those regions were so undefined that it was sometimes described as a city in the south-west of Phrygia, sometimes as of Caria, and sometimes of Lydia, stood the city of Laodicea. A group of towns of some importance crowded round the spurs of Mount Cadmus, the theatre of many apostolic labours—Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and Aphrodisias. Down the slopes of Cadmus many little streams work their way,

forming wider valleys as they approach the plain of the Meander, of which river they are the principal feeders. Near one of these stood Laodicea, generally called, from the name of the river, Laodicea on the Lycus. A long shoulder of a rounded hill stretches out into the level country, between the narrow valleys of the little streams Caprus and Asopus, which unite and form the Lycus. To reach the place from the coast we must follow up this valley, composed of dreary sand-hills with scarcely any vegetation, and monotonous rounded hills on either side. About fifteen miles up the valley we see in front a low hill, not quite a mile long, and about a quarter of a mile broad, clad with short herbage, excepting where, here and there, a rugged block of ruin protrudes. "Nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea. No picturesque features in the nature of the ground on which it stands relieve the dull uniformity of its undulating and barren hills." There is not even the geological character of the Catacaumene round Philadelphia, with its lava streams and basalt dykes to give a feature to the scenery. The gritty rocks are all horizontal, undisturbed by earthquake, and scored by time. The very ruins themselves are, like the hills, featureless masses of conglomerate, from whence all the marble facings have been torn by Turkish gravestone cutters, leaving the relics of fair temples reduced to the débris of a stone quarry.

The place, though utterly without inhabitants, is still marked by its Turkish name, *Eski Hissar*, i.e., Old Castle; and of ruins, enough are left to attest its ancient grandeur in the heaps of its vast stadium, its aqueducts, bridges, theatres, and gymnasium. In desolation it passes even Sardis.

The stonecutter never comes but for the day, and hurries back to Denisli. The pasturage is poor, and it is only in

SITE OF LAODICEA.

spring that even a gipsy-tent may occasionally be seen, while the flocks are grazing on the early herbage.

Yet the roll of its olden history is a long one, extending

from the establishment of the Greek empire to that of the Turkish. Pliny has given us its early traditions. They are not royal or mythical like those of Sardis. Trade, business, material prosperity, and luxury—not splendour, fame, or art—seem from the first to have been the pursuit of the Laodiceans. Pliny gives us its earliest history as known in his day. The Ionian Greeks, its probable founders, named it Diospolis, "the City of Jupiter," which was afterwards exchanged for the name of Rhoas, under which appellation it became the largest city of Phrygia. It suffered greatly during the wars of the successors of Alexander; and at length Antiochus II., king of Syria, surnamed Theos, rebuilt it, and gave it the name of his wife Laodice, whom he afterwards heartlessly divorced for the sake of a matrimonial and political connection with Ptolemy, king of Egypt, referred to in Dan. xi. 6: "In the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the South (Egypt) shall come to the king of the North (Syria) to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm." In two years the union was dissolved, and Laodice contrived the assassination of her husband and his new spouse.

We next find Laodicea suffering in the desperate contest between the Romans and Mithridates king of Pontus for the sovereignty of Asia, when the city sustained a long siege, was given over to pillage, and partially destroyed. But it quickly rose again, and, under the dominion of Rome, increased in wealth and importance. Many of its sons became merchant-princes, and lavished vast sums in the decoration of their native city. Strabo tells us of one merchant Hieron, who adorned the city with many splendid buildings, and at

his death bequeathed the enormous sum of two thousand talents to be applied to public purposes at Laodicea. No wonder that the inheritors of such wealth as this had yielded to the seductions of riches, and were led to boast, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" The orator Zenon, and the rhetorician Polemon, both of them natives of Laodicea in the Roman times, were also conspicuous benefactors to the city of their birth, and the former had taken an active part in encouraging his countrymen to resist the invasion of Labienus. Along with wealth there had evidently grown up a taste for arts, science, and literature; for the sceptic philosopher Antiochus and the empiric Theudas were natives and residents of Laodicea. There was also a great medical school here, distinguished by the names of some of the most eminent successors of Galen. Some of the existing ruins have been supposed to be the porticos of these philosophers. When the terrible earthquakes devastated Asia Minor in the reign of Tiberius, the wealth of this city enabled its inhabitants to restore it at once with greater splendour than before, at their own cost.

Long before the Christian era its commercial importance had drawn many Jews to settle here, and hence probably the very early establishment of Christianity. It lay on the line of the great road to the interior from the coast, and therefore, when the gospel had been preached at Ephesus, Laodicea, the seat of the Roman *conventus*, would soon, through its Hebrew visitors, hear of the new faith.

It is first mentioned in the New Testament in the epistle of St. Paul to the neighbouring church of Colosse, where the name occurs four times; but we have no record that the

apostle ever personally visited Laodicea. In fact, from the expression, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," it is reasonable to infer that St. Paul's missionary journeys had not extended thither, and this opinion is supported by the best critics. More difficult is another allusion to Laodicea in the same epistle: "Cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea,"[1] *i.e.*, the letter which was to come from Laodicea, which St. Paul had written to it. There have been two principal theories on this subject. *First*, that by the letter is meant the epistle to the Ephesians, which was addressed as a circular letter to several neighbouring churches, Laodicea among the rest, and which is, therefore, without those local salutations at the end which mark St. Paul's other epistles. *Secondly*, that the message refers to a letter now lost. Against this latter view our best authorities certainly incline, unless the letter were merely a slightly altered copy of another apostolic epistle. We have no trace of any such in early ecclesiastical history, nor any allusion to any lost letter of St. Paul. The apocryphal work professing to be the "Epistola ad Laodicenses" is manifestly a clumsy forgery, compiled from the Galatians and Ephesians, and only exists in Latin.

The subscription at the end of the first epistle to Timothy, stating it to have been written from Laodicea, is of no authority as to St. Paul's having ever visited the place; but it illustrates the importance of the city.

[1] Colos. iv. 16. See Howson, Ellicott, etc.

We next come to the Apocalyptic Epistle, which we shall find to contain various allusions to the peculiar circumstances and character of the place. The angel of the church of the Laodiceans has been supposed to be once mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians—"Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." In the apostolic constitutions Archippus is named as the first bishop of the Laodicean church. If he were the son of Philemon,[1] one of the principal converts of Colosse, it would be very natural to find him selected as bishop of the neighbouring city, perhaps more for his father's merits than his own, and he may very probably have been still holding that position thirty years later. If this conjecture be correct it would only be too consonant with the downward course of lukewarmness, that he who required from St. Paul, for his want of zeal and his slackness, the warning "Take heed," should in the lapse of years have grown more and more negligent, till he is visited with this sharpest reproof from his Lord.

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Here alone the Redeemer takes to himself the title "The Amen," more emphatically proclaiming his eternal truth than even the emphatic "Verily, verily," of his own discourses, and thus rendering the warning to Laodicea the most solemn and awful of all. He is also "the Beginning of the creation of God"—not, as the Arians and Socinians falsely explain, "the first created," but as He, the personified Wisdom, declares,[2] "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,

[1] Phil. ver. 2.

[2] Prov. viii. 23.

or ever the earth was"—"by whom all things were made." Any other interpretation would contradict every passage in Scripture in which Divine attributes are ascribed to him. Besides, every other title which he gives himself in these seven epistles is only compatible with Deity—the divinity whom every creature is represented, a little farther on, as worshipping together with the Father.[1]

The warning begins, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot." We might have thought that lukewarmness, though worse than heat, was at least a better state than that of spiritual coldness—that to have half a heart for Christ was better than not to be stirred at all by his love. It would doubtless be so, if it were spoken of a growing state,—advancing from the first melting of the icy heart to fervid love. But here he who is cold is one whom the powers of grace have never yet reached. He is one who has not tasted of the powers of the world to come at all. The lukewarm has tasted of the good gift, but has not been kindled by it. He is like the Pharisees—like that Simon who loved little; while the disciples were hot, and the publicans and harlots cold, until changed, like the woman in Simon's house, who, having had much forgiven, became from being icy cold intensely hot. "She loved much," like Saul the persecutor changed to Paul the apostle. These cold ones, when brought to know "the Amen," may reach a degree of Divine heat unattainable by the lukewarm, self-satisfied Simon.

As Jeremy Taylor remarks, "God hates lukewarm worse

[1] Rev. v. 13.

than stark cold . . . must mean that there is some appendant evil in this state which is not in the other, and that accidentally it is much worse; and so it is if we rightly understand it, *i.e.*, if we consider it not as a being in, or passing through the middle way, but as a state and a period of religion. If it be in motion, a lukewarm religion is pleasing to God; for God hates it not for its imperfection and its natural measures of proceeding; but if it stands still and rests there, it is a state against the designs and against the perfection of God." And because this state of indifference is absolutely nauseous to God, "I will spue thee out of my mouth:" where the original implies rather, "I am about to," or, "I intend to," as if giving time yet for the lukewarm to grow hot again.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable (*literally* 'the wretched one and the miserable one'), and poor, and blind, and naked." There is a figure here from the outward wealth and splendour of their city, applied to their self-deception in claiming for themselves spiritual riches, and glorying in spiritual gifts. They were perhaps misled, to their imminent peril, by the absence of outward or notorious heresy among them. It has been already remarked that the only two churches addressed, with reference to which there is no mention either of foes without or of traitors within, are just those two which were in the most deplorable spiritual condition—Sardis and Laodicea. Cold and dead, sunk in slumber, they slept on, undisturbed by heathen persecution or false Jews. No Nicolaitans corrupted their doctrine, no followers of Balaam, no seducing Jezebel rent the church, and at the same time

constrained them earnestly to contend for the truth. It was just, perhaps, because she had not gainsayers nor heretics to resist, that the church of Laodicea did not learn to grasp more firmly and to prize more dearly the truths she so coldly held. It was not good for them to be without the necessity of doing battle for the truth. What is this but the lesson which all church history teaches, that when the church has settled down at ease, supreme apparently over all around, she has lost, first her watchfulness, and then her faithfulness? The struggles of the second century prevented the church from settling down into a philosophical sect. The oft-recurring heresies of the third century caused all doctrine pertaining to the person and offices of our blessed Lord to be so defined, that clearness of dogma on those great points, and orthodoxy were ever after inseparable. The dominant church of the middle ages, on the contrary, lost all its life and its love, and sank into the dark sleep of death so soon as it had conquered the world, and the history of the middle of the eighteenth century in England and Scotland is almost a repetition of the same sad story.

But now comes the remedy offered to Laodicea: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Here is the three-fold remedy for their three-fold need—gold for their poverty, white raiment for their nakedness, eye-salve for their blindness. There is an irony, but, as it has been said, the irony of Divine love, in the counsel. The emphasis of the exhortation is in the words "buy of Me," in whom

are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They had relied for these especially on themselves; and the price they are called on to pay is simply the renunciation of their own wisdom and their own righteousness. All is a free gift, but to obtain that gift, they must strip themselves of their own filthy rags, and count their own spiritual attainments but dung that they win Christ's gifts. "Christ conforms himself, so far as the outward form of his words reaches, to the language of earth. To the merchants and factors of this wealthy mercantile city he addresses himself in their own dialect. Laodicea, on the great high road of oriental commerce, was a city of extensive money transactions, so that Cicero, journeying to or from his province, proposes to take up money there. Christ here invites to dealings with himself. He has gold of so fine a standard, that none will reject it. The wools of Laodicea, of a raven blackness, were famous throughout the world. He has raiment of dazzling white for as many as will receive it at his hands. There were ointments for which many of the Asiatic cities, perhaps Laodicea among the number, were famous; but he, as he will presently announce, has eye-salve more precious than them all. Would it not be wise to transact their chief business with him?"[1] Thus Perkins comments—"Christ saith, 'I counsel thee to buy of me,' when he alludeth to the outward state of this city, for it was rich, and also given to much traffic, as histories record; and therefore he speaks to them in their own kind, as if he should say, Ye are a people exercised in much traffic, and delighted with nothing more than buying and

[1] Trench, *in loc.*

selling. Well, I have wares that will serve your turn, as gold, garments, and oil; therefore come and buy of me."

The gold and the white raiment set forth the true riches, and the only garment that will clothe the nakedness of souls, the righteousness of Christ. Many profess Christ, who have not yet put on Christ. Here we have an illustration of the great doctrine, that Christ's righteousness must be not only imparted, but imputed—put on—if the shame of our nakedness is not to appear, while the beginning of all true growth is to have the eyes anointed with eye-salve, that we may be able to see ourselves really poor and naked, without righteousness, and standing in all our shame unclothed before God. The eye-salve, then, is the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit, which not only shows us the true nature of God, but reveals us to ourselves as we are in God's sight.

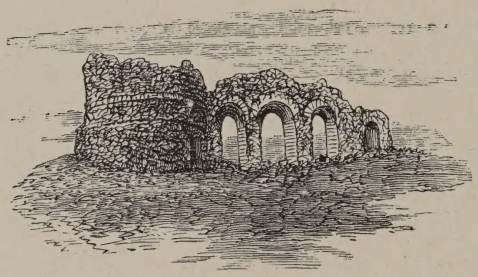
"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," evidently implies that the threat of being spued out of the mouth, the fate of utter rejection, is delayed to give time for repentance. And so the Lord continues: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The illustration is taken from the imagery of the Song of Solomon, and exactly sets forth Christ's mode of dealing with men. Not only does he wait for them, he comes to seek them. Instead of demanding that we should knock at his door, he knocks at ours. He searches for the straying sheep, and reverses the whole relation which we might have expected. He calls as well as knocks, that the sheep may hear his voice, and may know who it is that seeks admission to their hearts. He not only visits us by the outward deal-

ings of his providence, but speaking directly by the Holy Spirit to our spirits, He explains to the listening heart the purpose of His dispensations. Yet the knock and the voice may alike remain unheeded. It is man who must open the door. The Lord claims admittance as of right, but He does not break open the door. Man must open the gates of his own heart, in order that Christ may enter; and if it is he who must open, he can also keep them shut. Yet it is only when Christ knocks that man can open. "Whose heart the Lord opened" it must ever be; and none can feel any desire to open, unless with the external knockings of providences there come also the inward voice of the Spirit, penetrating within the heart. The coming in and supping with the believer is a figure, again, it would seem, taken from the Canticles, where the Beloved has prepared a feast for his bride, while she has prepared one for him. "Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits;" that spiritual feast, of which the Lord's Supper is the earthly emblem, and *to the spiritually-minded* the earthly antepast.

The final promise is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." "My throne" points to the exaltation of the saints in glory. "My Father's throne" to the exaltation of the only begotten Son to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. It must not escape our observation, that this promise held out to the church to which the most terrible warning of all has been given, as it is the last and crowning, so it is the highest and most glorious of all. Those who, if they remain lukewarm, are threatened with rejection and spueing out of his

mouth, are offered on repentance, not like the apostles, to sit on twelve thrones, but to share the throne with the Son himself. We may trace a regular gradation in the rewards offered to the faithful, till we reach this culminating triumph.

There is in the promises to the seven churches, it has been remarked, an order parallel to the unfolding of the kingdom of God from its first beginnings on earth to its glorious consummation in heaven. They begin with "the



RUINS OF HIERAPOLIS, NEAR LAODICEA.

tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God" to Ephesus, where we are carried back, as it were, to Eden. Then death entered, and the blessing to Smyrna is next, the removal of that curse, "I will give thee a crown of life." From the patriarchs we go on to the Mosaic dispensation, and the third blessing is the hidden manna and the white stone, more glorious than Urim. Then to Thyatira the figure is taken from the glories of the period of David and Solomon, "I will give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." The next three promises are not clothed

in type adapted from the history of the earthly church, but their language is from the prophecies of the church's spiritual future. First, the name not blotted out of the book of life, "but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." This is the individual blessing of immortality. Next follows, to Philadelphia, the promise of being made "a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more;" and the citizenship of the New Jerusalem, is fellowship with Christ and with all his glorified members. Lastly, we have here the crowning triumph, beyond which there can be nothing further of dignity or of blessing, for the summit has been reached, the very presence of Him who sits upon the throne, not only within reach of Him at all times, but, as it were, leaning on His breast. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne."

Whether the solemn warning against lukewarmness, and the glorious reward "to him that overcometh" roused the angel of the church of Laodicea for a time, and quickened his spiritual life, we know not. History tells us from time to time of the importance of the church there, in rank and numbers. Laodicea became the seat of a metropolitan archbishop, and under the roof of its cathedral church were gathered from time to time councils of the eastern church. One was gathered here at an uncertain date, either A.D. 363, or more probably A.D. 372; undoubtedly at a period of lukewarmness, for its leanings were decidedly semi-Arian, although its decrees were afterwards, through the influence of Basil and the Gregories, accepted by the orthodox church. These canons, first acknowledged by the eastern and afterwards by the western, do not, however, touch on any con-

troverted dogma of the great Christian verities. The best known is that which forbade the placing of bishops in country places, but directed that the villages should be visited by itinerating presbyters, under the direction of the bishop of the city. Practically, this council forbade the multiplication of suffragan bishops.

A much more important canon of this council, as showing how gradual was the change from the Jewish sabbath to the Christian Lord's-day, is that which regulates its observance. It enacts that "Christians shall not judaize or rest from labour on the seventh day, but work on it as usual. But on the Lord's-day they are to rest from labour, as far as possible (εἴγε δύναιντο), like Christians." In these days of chafing and fretting at the Divine authority of the Lord's-day, these words are very important, as proving the practice of the early church; nor less so are the comments of the Byzantine writers, who observe that the exceptions are special cases, as fighting to preserve men's lives against an enemy, toiling at the helm and oar to escape a storm, travelling to church for the service of God, dressing food for man, labouring to save the life of man or beast—or the like. No word here of games, or sports, or amusements, all of which were expressly and peremptorily forbidden, as in the code of Theodosius.

The council of Laodicea also affirmed the canon of Scripture as already laid down and received.

From this period the name of Laodicea often occurs incidentally in Greek writers, and it became a place of military as well as commercial importance. The emperor Manuel strongly fortified it after his visit on his way to Colosse and Apamea. But it shared the fate and terrible

vicissitudes of all the great cities of Asia Minor in that struggle with the Turks which lasted for generations. It was one of the first places captured by the Mussulman hordes towards the end of the eleventh century. Then about A.D. 1120 the emperor John Comnenus recaptured it, and restored for a time the Christian inhabitants. For one hundred years more it continued to change hands. Turk, Tartar, Greek and mercenary, alternately strode over its walls, till its final destruction by the Ottomans about A.D. 1230, when the place was utterly overthrown, the Christians who could not escape were slaughtered or seized as slaves, and the site of Laodicea became, what it has ever since continued, a desolate heap: "The circus and the stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes."[1] The Christian fugitives, still clinging to their native soil, fled to the ravines of Mount Cadmus, at the foot of which they afterwards reunited in the village of Denisli, which still exists with a handful of Christian inhabitants.

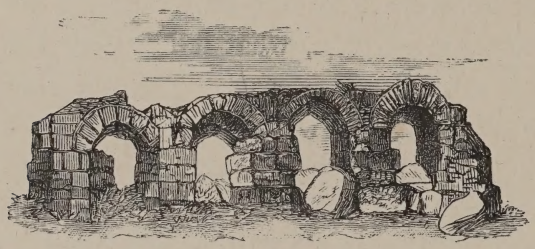
Many travellers have described at length the present state of the ruins of Laodicea. They strike one as rather bewildering than impressive. The vast masses of conglomerate, the huge crumbling piles of shapeless rubble and stone work, with the many fragments of marble slabs with which porticos and palaces were once veneered, recall rather the epoch of Roman luxury than of Grecian grandeur and solidity.

The circuit of the walls may be clearly traced, and also the places of the gateways, by the great heaps of ruin which

[1] Gibbon.

once composed the defensive towers. But there are many silent walls, which convey no idea of their purpose. Here and there are the possible remains of a church, and a few of the tombs outside bear Christian symbols. But of the great church which was the seat of metropolitans and the gathering-place of councils, no trace can be identified.

The remains of the aqueduct which supplied the city are almost continuous, the calcareous incrustation of the water having encased the arches into one mass of petri-



RUINS OF THE GYMNASIUM.

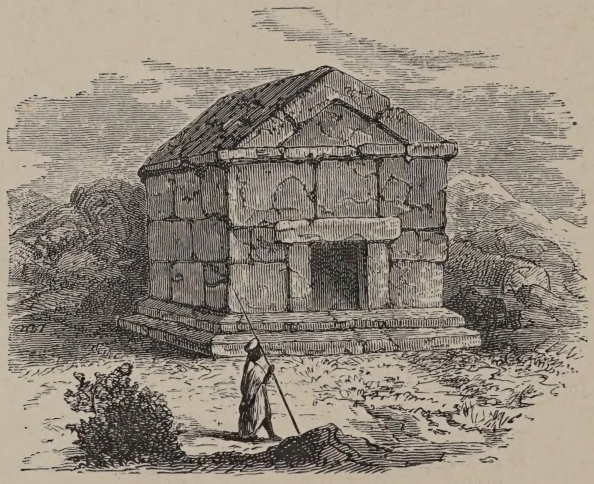
faction. It is interesting to notice that this aqueduct proves the Romans to have been acquainted with the hydrostatic principle of water finding its own level; for instead of being conveyed on lofty arches, it was conveyed down the hill in massive stone pipes, and then taken across the plain, and up the hill on the other side to its original level, into the town, where was a great reservoir near the circus. The stone pipes are hollowed to a diameter of two feet inside, and beautifully fitted one within the other. At the entrance of the city are the remains of a bridge, of which the uncemented stones appear to have been shaken out of their

places by an earthquake. The public buildings are all crowded on the acropolis, extending for about a mile in length. The finest and least destroyed of the ancient buildings is the stadium, hollowed out of the side of the hill, or rather out of two sides of a narrow valley utilised for the purpose, and closed across the end. The hollowed subterranean road by which the horses and chariots entered the arena, may still be traced. The rows of marble seats have not yet been all destroyed by the Turkish tomb-cutters, and some of them yet retain, roughly sculptured, the Greek letters and numbers which marked them either as private property, or as reserved seats. The marble seats have been all supported by carved lions' paws of the same material. Three other theatres remain, two of them of unusual size; the third, rather smaller, was doubtless the Odeum. A long inscription in the Greek language, of the period of Hadrian, can still be deciphered over the entrance, and has been published by Hamilton.

But since our visit, the progress of destruction has been rapid. Signor Svoboda, in his illustrations of the seven churches, gives sad details of the systematic destruction now going on. A party of workmen sawing marble in the theatre, told him they had been engaged for six years at the same place, and had dug out the whole entablature, which was covered with richly sculptured figures, and sawn it into slabs. Near the same place a colossal statue was seen sawn in pieces in the same way. No wonder, then, that the magnificent female colossal statue and others described by Pocock and several earlier travellers, have long since disappeared. So have also the two oriental agate pillars, eighteen inches

in diameter, which were standing one hundred and twenty years ago—as were rows of richly sculptured composite columns, adorned with busts and heads in relief, and vases with wreaths of leaves and fruits. The great theatre was in the Corinthian style, a little earlier than the others.

At the north extremity of the acropolis is supposed to have been the Christian basilica, and the bases of a few

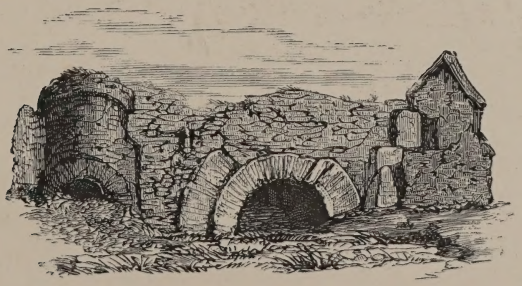


TOMB AT HIERAPOLIS, NEAR LAODICEA.

columns yet remain; but there is little of interest beyond them, and nothing to fix definitely the site of the Laodicean council. Just beyond the walls on this side are the traces of the Christian cemetery, as well as of the earlier heathen one. Many sarcophagi, some broken and some whole, are strewn about, but all long ago rifled. They are frequently used by the visitors for various purposes, and some have been carried

to Denisli for wine-presses or feeding troughs, according to the universal utilitarian custom of the East.

Such is Laodicea to-day—rejected and desolate, unvisited save by the riflers of tombs or the wandering gipsy. No picturesque features relieve the dull uniformity of its rounded and barren hills. Its grey and scattered ruins present little to attract. Yet when we recall its early history, interwoven with that of the foundation of our faith, and look back in historic retrospect on its splendour, its high professions, its Christian councils, and see it now shunned of man, and its crumbling heaps inhabited only by deadly serpents, the dread of the stranger who ventures to ramble among the ruins—we wonder no more at the tone of reverent awe with which even a Gibbon recounts the fate of the seven churches of Asia, and we withdraw from their contemplation with prophecy and fact blended before the mind's eye in one harmonious history.



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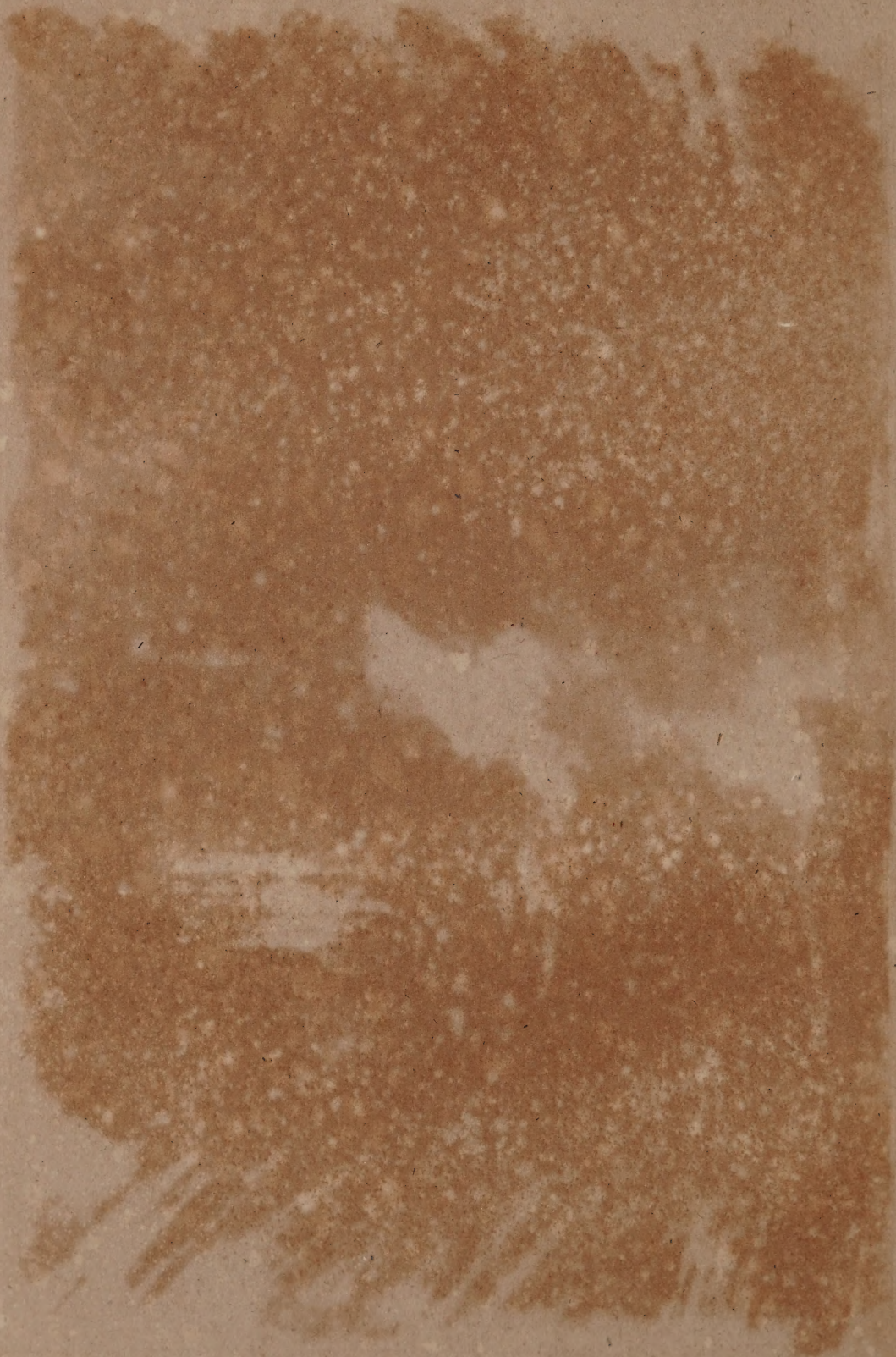

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